

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, by Frank Tousey.

No. 88.

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 28, 1900.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS IN MULBERRY BEND; OR

THE BOY SLAVES OF "LITTLE ITALY."

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.



Old King Brady grasped the Italian's wrist. "Don't hit that boy again!" he shouted angrily. Harry aimed his pistol at the men in the doorway. "Halt!" cried the young detective. "Halt, or I'll fire!" The intruders paused.

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The Bradys in Mulberry Bend

OR,

The Boy Slaves of "Little Italy."

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.

CHAPTER I.

STRUCK DOWN IN THE STREET.

One pleasant night in June, the Chief of the New York Secret Service was sitting at his desk. A man entered the office, clad in the garments of a foreigner. He was dark, clean-shaven, and wore fine clothing.

"You are the chief here, I presume?" he asked, with an Italian accent.

"I am. And you?"

"One of the secret police of Naples. Here are my credentials."

He handed over the papers and the chief glanced at them.

They were genuine and recommended Antonio Mora highly, begged the chief to favor the bearer in every way, and were signed by a high official.

"Well, sir, what can I do for you?" the chief asked. The Italian detective sat down and replied:

"Can I speak confidentially here, signor?"

"Yes. Nobody will disturb you, Mr. Mora."

"Then I shall tell my story. It is a strange one. My government needs your aid to clear up a mystery and see that justice is done."

"I shall be pleased to be of service to you, sir."

"Thank you. Let me explain. Here is the case: The family of Count Pietro Villanova lived in Palermo, on the Island of Sicily. It consisted of the father, mother and a son, named Marco. In the city of Messina lived a rich

banker, called Luigi Dorgali. They were rivals years before for the hand of Bianca, a beautiful girl whom the Count won and married."

"I see," said the chief, with a nod, as he lit a cigar.

"Well," proceeded the Italian detective, "when Dorgali found he was beaten he swore a *vendetta*. In other words, he declared he would kill the Count and his whole family. Years passed by, and when the boy, Marco, was fifteen years of age, his mother was mysteriously poisoned. The Count suspected Dorgali, and went to Messina to find out if his suspicions were correct. On the night he arrived, an assassin stabbed him to death in the street. Two days later, the boy Marco mysteriously disappeared from home. The police got wind of the facts, and set to work unraveling the mystery. I found that Dorgali had vanished from Messina. I traced him to Palermo. I ascertained that he had there boarded a ship for America in company with a boy answering Marco's description."

"Then you think Dorgali killed the Count and his wife, and abducted their son?" demanded the chief, showing a deep interest in the story.

"Exactly. In fact, I have evidence that Dorgali was the guilty party. Moreover, I know he reached New York with the boy, some time ago. When he fled, he was apparently on the verge of bankruptcy. Had he remained in Sicily, he would have been a ruined man financially, he declared. He therefore had nothing, seemingly, to gain by remaining in Sicily. By keeping the boy alive, he had everything to win, to build up his shattered fortune."

"How so?" demanded the chief, curiously.

"Because Count Villanova left his son an enormous for-

tune. It is our impression that Dorgali will strive to have the fortune made over to the young heir in such a way that he can handle it for the boy, and thus rob the little fellow of his inheritance."

"I see. That's why he did not kill the boy outright, I suppose."

"So we believe, signor."

"And you have come over the ocean to capture Dorgali, and rescue the boy?"

"That's my plan, precisely."

"Can you describe the boy and the man?"

"Easily," replied the Italian, and he gave a detailed description.

"And what do you want of us?" queried the chief.

"To aid me to capture my man."

"We shall do so."

"Thank you. I shall get to work."

"At once?"

"To-morrow morning."

"Very well, Mr. Mora. Call upon us when you please, and we will endeavor to aid you in every way possible."

After a few more words, the Italian detective departed.

As the door closed behind him, two detectives who had been listening while concealed behind a portiere over a door, stepped into view.

They were the Bradys—the two greatest detectives in the Secret Service.

Old King Brady was a tall, white-haired, smooth-shaven old man, and Young King Brady, his partner and pupil, was a handsome boy of twenty.

Merely the ties of friendship bound this remarkable pair together despite the fact that their names were the same.

As a team they were a terror to the crooks.

The chief smiled when he saw them.

"Eavesdroppers!" he exclaimed.

"We were just going to enter when Mora came in," explained Old King Brady, half apologetically. "But we paused when he spoke. Not to interrupt we waited until he was gone."

"You heard all he said to me, I suppose?"

"Every word, chief," laughed Harry, the boy. "It's a queer case."

"Well, I hope the Dago officer will run down his man and save the boy," said the chief. "A romance like that ought to end happily."

"He's likely to find his man in 'Little Italy,' sir," said the old detective.

"True, and——"

But just then there came a startling interruption.

In the street a pistol shot rang out sharply.

It was followed by a man's voice shrieking with agony.

The Bradys glanced at each other. Then, with one accord they rushed to the door, and dashed out of the office.

By the light of a street lamp they saw the body of a man stretched out on the sidewalk, not fifty yards away.

A man was running toward the corner at the top of his speed. To all appearances he was the person who assaulted the man lying on the sidewalk.

Clad in rough garments and an old felt hat, he looked much like a laborer and as he glanced back over his shoulder, the Bradys noticed that he wore a bushy black beard which almost concealed his features.

The detectives took in the situation at a glance.

"Man shot!" Old King Brady commented.

"He must be the one whose voice we heard," Harry answered.

"No doubt. And there runs the man who shot him."

"You attend the fallen man and I'll chase the fugitive."

"Go quick, or you'll lose him, Harry!"

The boy nodded and sped away just as the runner turned the corner.

Old King Brady rushed to the side of the fallen man. A cry of amazement escaped him when he discovered his identity.

"It's Antonio Mora, the Italian detective!" he muttered.

There was no question about it. He was the same person who had just come from the chief's office.

Old King Brady turned him over.

He saw an ugly wound in the man's head.

Bending closer, he examined Mora's features.

His face was white, his eyes glaring, and his body limp.

"Dead!" exclaimed the detective.

And such was the fact.

The Italian had been assassinated.

Several officers from the Secret Service office now ran up to the spot and telling them what occurred, Old King Brady got them to carry the body of Mora to the office.

The Italian Consul was then notified of the tragedy, over the telephone, and in an hour he walked into headquarters.

When he heard the particulars, he said to the chief:

"This is a very grave crime. Mora was the most famous detective in Italy. He was a government agent. I therefore demand, in the name of my Government, that you find his murderer and bring him to justice."

"It shall be done," replied the chief.

"Have you any idea who committed this dastardly act?"

"Yes," replied the chief. "The fugitive criminal to catch whom Mora just came to this country. He is the one most likely to know the detective and have a grudge against him."

"Do you think you can overtake him?"

"I'm sure of it. One of my keenest young detectives is on his trail now."

"Good! I hope he will have success."

"Will you take charge of Mora's body?"

"Certainly, as soon as the coroner holds his inquest."

Just then the telephone bell rang.

"Old King Brady wanted at the 'phone," announced the chief, who answered it.

"Hello! Hello!" cried the detective in question, taking the receiver.

"Hello! That you, Old King Brady?" came the reply.

"Yes. What do you want, Harry?"

"I need you right away!"

"Got your man?"

"No. He gave me the slip in Mulberry Bend."

"You down there, now?"

"I am. You'll find me corner of Bowery and Bayard street."

"Very well. I'll go right down."

As he rung off, the chief said to him, earnestly:

"Here's a case for you, Old King Brady."

"Do you want us to run down the criminal?"

"By all means."

"Very well."

And Old King Brady hastened out to meet his partner.

CHAPTER II.

RACING FOR LIFE WITH AN ENGINE.

Harry ran around the corner in pursuit of the man he had seen escaping. The young detective was convinced that he was the person who had shot Antonio Mora.

"But why did he shoot Mora?" thought the boy. "The only reason I can think of is that he was Dorgali. The villain may have known Mora. Seeing the detective here, he perhaps inferred that Mora was after him. Evidently Dorgali was unlucky enough to be passing just as Mora was coming out of our office. The rascal inferred that Mora was in America in pursuit of him. There's a possibility that they had words together. Mora may have accused the banker and attempted to arrest Dorgali. In a panic of desperation and fear, the fugitive very likely drew his gun and shot the detective to avoid arrest. That must be the explanation of what happened. Ah! There he goes. Heading for the elevated railroad station at Chatham Square. He means to escape on the cars."

The boy quickened his pace.

Ahead he saw his prey.

Running like a deer, the villain reached the station, mounted the stairs and reached the station platform.

Harry was close behind him.

Clouds flying over the dark azure sky now obscured the light of the moon and threw a pall of gloom upon the city.

Young King Brady glanced up the track.

There was a train coming downtown, but it was far away.

When the boy rushed out on the platform, the fugitive saw that it would be impossible for him to escape on the cars.

It made him frantic.

He sprang down upon the sleepers and made up his mind to run on and get down through an opening, and descend one of the iron columns to the street.

Unfortunately for this plan, Harry was quite close behind him and he dared not pause, for fear of being seized ere he had the chance he longed for. There was no recourse except to run.

This he did.

Over the tires he went at a lively pace.

Harry followed the man eagerly.

The boy was so intent upon overtaking the man, that he failed to see that the oncoming train had reached the station behind him.

To gain much on the fugitive in such a race was not possible, but the boy being more agile than the man, did gain some.

Heading around the curve at Chatham Square, the rascal was going toward the bridge terminal.

Young King Brady followed him down as far as Park Row.

It was a dangerous run.

Every moment one or the other stumbled.

Then there was the constant danger of their making a mis-step and falling into one of the openings between the sleepers.

Such an accident might be fatal.

But the fugitive kept on.

A rumbling sound in the rear reached Harry's ears.

He glanced back and was alarmed to see that the train had left the station and was then rushing toward him.

The gloom was so great that the boy could not see much of the cars, but he plainly observed the glaring headlight and the glow of the car lamps.

They were bearing down upon him with frightful rapidity and the boy saw no chance to get out of the way of danger.

"I'll have to run for it, and trust to luck for the engineer to see us here," he cogitated.

Then he ran faster.

The flying fugitive now observed the danger menacing them and it caused him to redouble his speed, from increased alarm.

It was quite evident that the engineer could not see them distinctly in that gloom, in season to stop his train.

The result of an impact with the locomotive would either cause them to be hurled from the track to perish in the street below, or else the cars were liable to run over and crush and mangle them.

It was a nerve-trying position.

On they sped ahead of the fast approaching train, and for a moment it looked as if the pair were lost.

The fugitive was so overwhelmed with alarm that he shouted:

"Stop the cars! Stop the cars!"

His frantic appeal was useless, however, for the engineer had seen the pair and was shutting off steam and applying the brakes.

He blew the shrill whistle sharply and the slipping cars had run up to within a few feet of Harry when the boy tripped and fell.

The fugitive was desperate.

He paused and dropped down between the sleepers.

Fortunately for him there was a column close by and he quickly let himself down upon it and climbed to the ground.

Harry—bumped and bruised, struggled to his feet.

The locomotive had come to a pause within a few inches of his body and he heard the engineer swearing at them and yelling:

"Get off the track! Blast you, what are you doing there, anyway?"

Harry made no reply.

He was thinking of what a narrow escape from death they had and was looking around to see what became of the man he had been pursuing.

At first he thought the fellow had jumped from the tracks.

Chanceing to peer down between the sleepers, though, he caught view of the rascal descending the column.

Following him, the boy reached the street a few yards behind the badly-frightened man and ran after him.

The train passed on down to the Bridge.

Harry chased his man over to Mulberry street.

He was heading toward the Italian colony and soon rushed into the densely-populated district known as Mulberry Bend.

Between two little old rookeries used as stores, was a narrow alley at the mouth of which stood a number of Italian men and women.

The fugitive dashed into their midst.

Saying something to them, he darted into the alley.

Just as Harry rushed up to follow him, the gang of Italians swarmed around the boy, barring his advance.

A big dark-skinned fellow with a fierce mustache and ear-rings in his ears, strode before the boy and demanded in ugly tones:

"Well, whata yo' wan'?"

"Get out of my way!" testily answered the panting boy.

"Carrissima! No, youa notit de goa in dere!"

"But I'm after that man!" roared Harry, angrily, as he made an effort to push past the man. "Move aside!"

"Youa chasa da man, eh?"

"Can't you see I am?"

"He ma friend!" declared the man, getting in Harry's way again.

"So you are shielding him, are you?"

"Wea makit dat you nota de catcha him."

"I'll be hanged if you will!" cried Harry.

He seized the big fellow and hurled him aside.

Several of his friends now closed in on the boy and one of them struck Harry a blow with his fist that made the young detective stagger.

Young King Brady's temper now arose.

Without the slightest hesitation he doubled up his fist and struck his assailant a blow between the eyes that knocked him down.

Fierce imprecations arose from the rest.

They could not stand it to see their friend beaten.

With one accord the whole rough crowd closed in around the gallant boy and beat and kicked him unmercifully.

Harry did not flinch.

It simply increased his anger.

He struck out right and left and knocked several over.

The attack was so impetuous and determined that the

rest could not face the young fighter. They scattered and fled.

A grim, cynical smile crossed Young King Brady's face.

He gazed around coolly, and observing that his enemies were not likely to follow, he rushed into the dark, narrow alleyway.

Across the brick-paved court, there was a rear house with dim lights glowing through some of the broken windows.

The back door of the front house was closed and locked from which he inferred that the fugitive was not there.

"He must have gone into the rear house," cogitated Harry. "I'm going to venture in after him, anyway."

Pushing open the door he was just upon the point of entering when a big gang armed with clubs and similar weapons came swarming out of the house and rushed at him.

He realized by their excited cries and the manner in which they brandished their weapons, that they were going to attack him.

Against such big odds, the boy felt that he would get rough handling, and he retreated out into the yard.

Here he paused.

The gang followed him.

"There will be a fight here in a minute!" he muttered.

CHAPTER III.

HOT TIMES IN MULBERRY BEND.

Harry glanced coolly at the furious crowd of Italians threatening him.

A scornful smile curled the boy's lips and he waited until all hands had made a rush toward him. Then he whipped out his revolver.

Raising the weapon and aiming it at the foremost man, he shouted:

"Stop where you are, or I'll shoot!"

They saw the pistol, and paused.

The resolute expression upon the face of the daring young detective convinced them that he would brook no trifling.

An excited jargon of Italian voices arose.

"Get out of this!" the boy exclaimed. "Go, and be quick about it, too!"

A panic seized the crowd.

With one accord they retreated.

"Don't shoot, boss!" one of the men cried.

"I shall if you dare to attack me."

"What do you want here, anyway?"

"The man I chased in here."

"Are you an officer?"

"I am. I'll get that fellow yet."

"He ain't here now, boss."

"Oh, yes, he is. He's hiding in that house."

"No, no. You make a mistake, sir."

"Well, I'll mighty soon find out if I have."

By this time the whole crowd were in the hall, and Harry saw that it would be as much as his life was worth to try to get in alone.

"I'll have to get aid!" he thought, regretfully.

As his partner was the only one he could rely on, he resolved to telephone for him, and retreated to the street.

On Third avenue he hired a 'phone.

Waiting for Old King Brady, he finally met him.

The situation was explained.

The old detective thought over the matter, and finally said:

"We won't find that man now."

"Why not?" asked the boy in surprise.

"He's among friends. They are bound to shield him."

"I expected as much."

"By this time, during your absence, they must have smuggled him out of that house. We shall have to hunt for him again. However, it will do no harm to search the house."

He took a chew of tobacco and they hurried back to the rear house.

Just as Old King Brady expected, they met no opposition.

A search through both houses failed to reveal the fugitive.

Finding their work in vain, the two detectives finally departed without even seeing the gang who opposed Harry.

They had scattered, sneaked away and were keeping under cover.

When the Bradys reached the street, Harry asked:

"Shall we give it up?"

"No. This case is ours to work up."

"Ours?" demanded the boy in surprise.

"Exactly. The chief wants us to follow it up."

"I see. We are to find Mora's murderer."

"Yes. Let us find a motive for the crime, and behind it we shall discover the criminal," said Old King Brady.

"Was the body robbed?"

"No."

"Then robbery did not actuate the criminal."

"Of course not. We have only one theory thus far. We know that Mora was a stranger in New York. We also know he had a bitter enemy in the person of Dorgali. The fugitive banker had motive enough to kill Mora, but it's a question whether he did the deed himself or merely hired an assassin to do the dirty work for him."

"One thing is evident," said Harry. "That is, that the appearance of the man I was chasing does not correspond with the description Mora gave the chief of Dorgali. The Italian detective represented Dorgali as a short, stout man, with a full, florid face, round features, and a dark mustache and hair. The man I chased was tall and slender, and had a bushy black beard. His thick hair was of the same color."

"In that case he was not Dorgali."

"So I am convinced. Was Mora really killed?"

"Yes. The bullet pierced his brain."

"What a pity. We must trace his movements. Thus we may find a tangible clew to the man who shot him."

"Very well. Come on, at once. Time is valuable."

They quickly planned a course of procedure and hastened away.

On the following morning they proceeded to headquarters and were closeted with the chief for several hours.

They had made some important discoveries.

The chief asked them:

"Well, what have you done?"

"Been tracing Mora's movements, sir," replied Harry.

"And the result?"

"Very satisfactory."

"Give me the details."

"First, we found that Mora landed from Europe on the steamer Oceanic. The officers explained that they knew Mora very well. During the voyage he had absolutely nothing to say to any one. Holding himself aloof and minding his own business, he made no friends or acquaintances. It is thus evident that nobody on the steamship had any occasion to prove an enemy of his."

"That's a fact," assented the chief. "What next?"

"Next, we ascertained that he left the steamer in a cab."

"Did you locate the vehicle?"

"Yes. The driver brought him straight to the Fifth Avenue Hotel where he registered, and was assigned to a room. He remained in his apartment until six o'clock. He then had his supper. This done, he was seen to stroll to the Broadway entrance. He stood there and smoked up a cigar. While he was so occupied, one of the hotel guests was seen by a porter to approach the door. This man's appearance fits the description Mora gave you of Dorgali. We afterward ascertained that he was registered as Mr. Roderick. The porter saw him pause, glare at Mora, and beat a hasty retreat. He went out of the hotel by another exit and has not been seen since."

"Dorgali, no doubt," commented the chief with a nod.

"So we believe. It shows that Mora was seen and recognized by his enemy. It shows that Dorgali knew him by sight. And it indicates that the villain prepared a trap for the man who wanted to arrest him. At any rate, Mora departed from the hotel at 7.30. He was seen to take a Broadway car, the number of which was noticed. We found the car in question and the conductor recalled Mora to mind, as he slipped and fell in getting off the car near this office. He was seen by the conductor to head in this direction. Moreover, another man, whose description fits the murderer was on the same car with the Italian detective. He alighted after Mora did. The suspicious manner in which he sneaked after the detective attracted some attention. In fact, the policeman on the corner observed it. We heard from him that he was so suspicious of Mora's follower, that he walked up to the man, tapped him on the back and asked why he was stealing after Mora in such a queer way. The rascal muttered some lame excuse, and scowling at the patrolman, he hurried away."

The chief laughed.

"You've got a fine lead," he remarked.

"We are more than satisfied," replied Harry.

"Did you trace that fellow any further?"

"Yes. We struck his trail again up at the next corner. The bartender of a saloon there saw the wretch lurking in a doorway, watching Mora coming to this office. When the Italian officer entered this building his shadower came down the street. There was a dirt-cart standing near where we found the body. The detective's pursuer was seen to go skulking behind the cart. Here all trace of him was lost."

"Then he must have laid in wait for his victim behind the cart?"

"Of course. When Mora came out of here, the hidden assassin shot him. Then he ran away and I chased him, as you already are aware."

"Every clew dove-tails," said the chief in pleased tones.

"Yes, indeed."

"And you have a theory formed?"

"We firmly believe this: That Dorgali was stopping at the Fifth Avenue Hotel the same time the detective was. We think he saw and recognized his enemy. We are convinced that he hired an assassin. It's our opinion that he placed the villain on guard outside the hotel, with orders to follow and destroy Mora if it were possible. That the villain obeyed his orders is self-evident."

"But you don't know who he is?"

"No. We don't. But we've seen his face and form, and would know him if we meet him again."

"Good enough! I'm glad to hear you say that."

"The very fact that he made a bee-line for the Italian colony in Mulberry Bend and was there defended by a huge crowd, plainly shows that he lives in that neighborhood and has many friends there."

"And are you going to watch the Bend until you find him?"

"That's exactly our plan."

"Very well, Harry; and I hope you'll catch him."

The Bradys nodded, and finally departed to hunt for the man again.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BOY SLAVE OF "LITTLE ITALY."

On the following morning while the Bradys were walking down the Bowery, near Canal street, they heard a pleading voice cry:

"Shine? Shine, sir?"

Something in the tones of that voice was so pathetic that the detectives paused, glanced around at the speaker and saw he was a little boy.

He was a delicate-looking lad, clad in an old shirt, torn pants, and wore an old felt hat. He was barefooted and carried a bootblack's kit.

But what impressed the detectives more than anything

else was the fact that his face, feet and hands did not harmonize with the dirty and shabby garments he wore.

In the first place his hands and feet were small, well-formed, and were as clean and white as snow.

The boy had a mass of jet-black hair clustering in pretty ringlets about a high, white forehead. His nose was beautifully formed, he had a big pair of wondering dark eyes and a pale, delicate face.

In a word he looked like an aristocrat dressed in rags.

Old King Brady nodded to him and said:

"All right. Shine 'em up."

The boy eagerly dropped his box on the pavement and set to work in a clumsy fashion to polish the detective's shoes.

"You haven't been a bootblack very long, have you?" asked the detective.

"No, sir;" replied the little fellow, with a surprised look.

"How did you know?"

"By the awkward manner you go about your work."

"Oh; I see."

"Why were you so anxious to give me a shine?"

"To earn the money."

"Were you so hard up as all that?"

"Yes, sir. I've got to make a certain amount every day for the padrone who employs me, or I'll get a beating. I need forty cents more to make up the necessary amount."

"Are you the slave of a padrone?" the detective asked in tones of pity.

"Yes," was the reply. "I am only one of a dozen Italian boys who are obliged to slave morning, noon and night for old Pippo."

"What is your name?"

"The boys call me Jack."

"Where do you live?"

"In Mulberry Bend."

"Are your parents alive?"

"No, sir."

"Born here, I suppose?"

"No. In Italy."

"How came you to be here?"

"I was brought here to earn my own living."

"By whom?"

"That I dare not tell you."

"Why?"

"Because, if Pippo heard that I had been telling anything about myself, he would beat and abuse me terribly."

"For a foreigner you speak good English."

"I was educated in my country to speak your language."

"That accounts for it. I suppose you wasn't poor always."

"No, indeed, sir. I was very well brought up."

"Haven't you got any relations?"

"Not one."

"Too bad. You are out of your element, my boy."

"It can't be helped," said the bootblack with a sigh. "Everybody must earn a living and this seems to be the only way I can earn mine. Other foot, sir."

Old King Brady shifted his left foot to the box, and the boy set to work at polishing the shoe.

The old detective had suddenly taken such a deep interest in Jack that he turned to Harry and said in low tones:

"I'd like to see the way this chap lives."

"Nothing easier," responded Harry meaningly.

"Shall we go?"

"By all means. It's right in our line of travel, you know."

The boy finally finished the remaining shoe, and Old King Brady tossed him a quarter and told him to keep the change.

Jack gazed at him in amazement.

"Keep it?" he echoed. "Can I?"

"That's what I said."

Tears gathered in the boy's eyes, and he exclaimed:

"You've saved me from a cruel beating."

"I hope so," the detective replied.

"Generally I have such poor luck," explained the little fellow, "that I rarely bring home as much money as Pippo expects. My body is covered with cuts and bruises from that man's whip."

"Why don't you leave him?"

"And starve to death?"

"Nonsense. Can't you earn enough to support yourself?"

"Yes, sir, but it never entered my mind before to leave him. In fact, I'd be afraid to do so. He would surely find me. Then the punishment I'd get would be unbearable."

"Pippo must be a brute."

"In Italy he was a brigand, I've been told."

"What does it signify?"

"Ah, you don't know how wicked and heartless those mountain robbers are. They commit all sorts of crimes. They are utterly heartless, and everybody fears them."

Old King Brady laughed heartily.

"Fairy tales and ghost stories," he answered in tones of contempt. "Don't you let Pippo fool you with his tough reputation. The next time he attacks you, hit him with the first thing you can get your hands on and I'll warrant you he will have more respect for you."

The boy made no reply.

Pleasant as this advice was to him, he knew very well that he would not have the courage to follow it.

He packed the brushes in his kit.

Shouldering the box, he wished Old King Brady good-by and started down the street, accosting the different men he met.

The detectives watched him a moment, then Harry said:

"Poor boy! His lot in life is very unpleasant."

"He's too young to take his own part, that's all."

"Follow him, or he'll get away from us."

They slowly sauntered after the boy.

He went down the Bowery, but failed to get another job, and finally turned down a side street to the west side.

Reaching Mulberry Bend, the boy proceeded straight toward the alley into which Harry chased Mora's murderer.

The boy entered it.

After him went the detectives.

Harry was amazed to see where he went.

"Must live in that rear house!" he exclaimed.

"I didn't see any sign of a padrone joint there when we searched the place," Old King Brady replied.

They glided into the alley.

Reaching the yard they peered ahead.

The boy had gone straight to the rear house, pushed open the door and vanished from view inside.

There were lights in the lower windows, and the detectives approached one of them and peered under the yellow shade.

A small, dirty room, with a bare floor was revealed. A lamp on a table illuminated the place, and upon a cooking stove some food was stewing presided over by a big Italian woman.

In the room were nearly a dozen ragged little bootblacks, and their kits stood on the floor close by.

A man was examining the kits to see how much polish and blacking the boys had used up that day.

Among the groups of little fellows standing there looking on, was Jack.

Having finished his inspection, the padrone, for such he was, sat down at the table and called the boys to him one by one.

From each one he took the money earned that day.

Several of the boys were short of money, and this seemed to make the man furious. He told them to stand apart from the rest.

Among them was Jack. He was fifteen cents short.

The boy was weeping, for he had not enough in money to buy his immunity from a beating.

Having taken away all their money, Pippo suddenly rose, and seizing a rawhide whip, he laid it heavily on the nearest boy.

A shriek of pain escaped the little fellow.

But that did not deter the brute.

He beat the boy savagely, and did not desist until from sheer exhaustion the bootblack fell to the floor.

Paying no heed to his victim Pippo rushed savagely at the next one, and the watching detectives were horrified to see that it was poor Jack. The padrone hurled the screaming boy to his knees on the floor and gave him a terrific cut across the back with the whip.

"Come in and stop him!" said Harry, in disgust.

"Go on."

And into the house they rushed. Two strange Italians followed them.

CHAPTER V.

IN THE PADRONE'S DEN.

Pippo had his fist on Jack's head, and the boy was raising his clasped hands when the old detective rushed into the room.

Harry was close behind his partner.

Old King Brady grasped the Italian's wrist.

"Don't hit that boy again!" he shouted angrily.

Harry aimed his pistol at the men in the doorway.

"Halt!" cried the young detective. "Halt, or I'll fire!"

The intruders paused.

They were friends of Pippo, and were curious to see what was happening.

One glance at that pistol brought them to terms.

With yells of terror they fled at the top of their speed.

The Bradys did not purpose to waste any time or words upon Pippo. Their sole object was to rescue the boy slave from the tyrant's cruelty. It made their blood boil to see him beating Jack.

His wife was a silent spectator.

Young King Brady sprang forward and gave the brute a punch on the jaw that sent him staggering across the room.

The frightened bootblacks gazed on in speechless alarm.

Every one of them expected nothing less than to see Harry get killed.

A grayish pallor of rage overspread Pippo's face, and he rushed toward the young detective with bared teeth and glaring eyes.

"Cospetto!" he hissed. "You hita me."

"Yes, and I'll do it again if you don't let that boy alone," said Harry.

By that time Pippo reached the young detective.

With lightning-like speed he pulled a stiletto from his breast pocket, and rushed at the detective with the knife upraised, crying:

"I'm going to killa you!"

"Are you?" asked Harry, thrusting a revolver in Pippo's face.

A yell of consternation escaped the man.

He recoiled and looked frightened.

"Mercy!" he yelled in tones of agony.

"Drop that knife!" ordered Harry quietly.

He met the glare of the Italian's eyes with a glittering stare that made Pippo's flesh creep, and the padrone let the dagger fall.

He began to fear Harry.

To him the boy looked very dangerous.

"Me no enta you!" he gasped.

"I don't believe you will," replied Young King Brady coolly.

Just then Pippo's wife gave a shriek and rushed forward, under the impression that Harry was going to shoot her husband.

Swiftly picking up the dagger, she made a lunge at the boy and Harry darted aside to avoid it. The blade whizzed past his head.

"You leavea him be!" she cried furiously.

Old King Brady now thought best to take a hand in the game.

At one stride he ranged up behind the woman and grasping her by the wrist, he wrenched the dagger from her hand.

"You keep out of this fuss!" he roared.

"*Ave Maria!* Leavea me cut him!" she screamed frantically.

"Not on your life! Clear out of here, Madam, or by jingo I'll have to use force. Do you hear me?"

And firmly grasping her by the arm he dragged her to the door.

Pippo took advantage of the diversion.

He saw a chance to escape and rushing across the room he plunged head first through the window.

Landing in the yard, he rushed away.

As the man was gone, the detectives saw that they now would have very little to do there.

The old detective then said to the woman:

"Are you going to behave?"

"Yes," she replied in sulky tones.

"Then get into the next room."

She strode away with an evil look in her glittering black eyes, and Old King Brady turned and asked the boys:

"Do you chaps want to stay here?"

None of them answered.

They feared to express their real feelings.

The old detective saw what was troubling them and continued:

"I'll send an agent of the Gerry society here. He will take you all away and put you in good homes where no more padrones will do you any harm in the future."

Old King Brady's words produced a panic.

Instead of cheering up the boys he filled their minds with the most unutterable horror, for they were taught to look upon the children's society as worse than State's Prison.

Every one of the boys looked frightened, some began to whimper and Jack cried in tones of alarm:

"Oh, for pity's sake don't do that, sir."

"Why not?" demanded the old detective.

"None of us wish to go there."

"Do you prefer this sort of life?"

"Yes. A thousand times more."

"Well, you boys are mighty queer," said the disgusted detective.

Jack made no reply.

"Can't do any good here," said Harry. "Best to leave the poor kids to their fate. They prefer it."

"Yes," growled the old detective. "They're crazy; don't understand how much better off they'd be there rather than here."

And the Bradys strode out.

When they reached the street, they found it swarming with men, women and children. They were in the doorways, on the sidewalks, in the gutters, and, in fact, everywhere.

A more squalid-looking set of people it would be hard to find.

Pushcarts were lining the curb, people were buying from stands in front of stores, and everything was full of life and activity.

The Bradys strode up the Bend.

From force of habit they scrutinized everyone they met.

It was the constant expectation of meeting Dorgall that

made them do this. It seemed likely to them that he would haunt "Little Italy," where so many of his countrymen were to be found.

Upon reaching the corner, they paused, and Old King Brady asked:

"What do you think of the padrone system, Harry?"

"Those poor boys seem to be veritable slaves."

"That's what they are."

"Does that wretch live upon their earnings?"

"Yes. More; he'll get rich at it. It's one of the worst features of New York. Just imagine the poor parents of those boys in poverty-stricken Italy binding out their children to such a shark. They little know the boys are abused, I'll warrant you."

Just then they heard the quick patter of bare feet and glancing around saw Jack running toward them.

He was watching a man on the other side of the street.

As he reached the detectives Harry seized his arm, stopping him.

"Hey! where are you going?" asked the young detective.

The boy gave him a frightened glance.

"Let me go!" he panted.

"What are you up to, Jack?"

The little fellow pointed at the man across the street.

"Following him," he replied. "I want to see where he's going."

Harry glanced at the man and saw he was the padrone.

"Your boss," he exclaimed.

"Yes," replied the bootblack.

"Where is he going?"

"For his money, I guess."

"What money?"

"My board."

"Who pays it?"

"Oh, a certain party," evasively replied Jack. "I don't dare tell."

The detectives looked surprised for they did not suspect before that the little fellow was anything but a friendless child.

Flashing a significant glance at each other, the detectives nodded and Harry finally asked the boy:

"Isn't the party's name Dorgali?"

Jack gave a start, turned pale and shot a keen, searching glance at the young detective; then he compressed his lips and said sullenly:

"I don't know such a party."

"Don't lie, Jack."

"Who's lying?"

"You are. I can see it."

The bootblack's face reddened. He looked very uneasy, and jerking his sleeve from Harry's grasp, he exclaimed:

"I'm going."

"Held on, there."

"What now?"

"Tell me—Isn't your real name Marco Villanova?"

The little fellow looked as if he would faint. He was breathing heavily, his eyes had a peculiar expression, and his face turned white.

After a moment's hesitation he exclaimed roughly:

"No—that ain't my name."

And he started off on a run in pursuit of the padrone, to see where the man was going.

"Follow him!" said Old King Brady hurriedly.

"Did you see how guilty he looked?"

"Yes and I think he is deceiving us."

"Then you, too, imagine he may be the missing boy?"

"Exactly," said the old detective with a nod.

And the next moment they hurried away after the boy.

CHAPTER VI.

A GREAT SURPRISE.

Ignorant of the fact that his movements were being shadowed, Jack followed the padrone over to Baxter street.

Pippo passed into a dim, grimy little drinking saloon kept by an Italian.

The foul-odored place was reeking with filth, the air was clouded with rank smoke, and the front room was thronged with Italians.

Some were drinking at the greasy bar, others were playing cards at the tables, one man was eating some onions and bread, and the rest stood in groups talking and jesting with each other.

Few there were not crooks.

The padrone glanced around keenly.

His glance finally fell upon a man sitting alone at a table in the rear room with a glass of beer standing before him.

A smile of satisfaction crossed Pippo's face, and paying no heed to the swarthy gang around him, headed for the man.

This personage was well-dressed, short and stout.

He had a slightly bald head, a jet black mustache, and a pair of keen black eyes that had a singularly restless expression.

He half arose and a smile of pleasure crossed his face when he beheld the padrone. Then he extended his hand and said in English:

"Pippo, I'm glad to see you."

"Ah, signor, de pleasure is the samea with me," replied the padrone as he bowed and cringed, and smiled at the other.

"Sit down, Pippo, sit down."

The Italian complied.

He did not observe little Jack.

The boy had crept in like a phantom and was skulking at the end of the dingy bar. Apparently he was playing with a kitten on the floor. In reality he was hiding and listening to what the two men were saying with deep interest.

When Pippo was seated the stout man said:

"Order a drink, Pippo, and make yourself quite comfortable. I will pay for it, my boy. I have come, as you

know, to pay you for the keep of the boy, and here is your money, my friend."

He handed over a roll of bills, and Pippo ordered a glass of red wine.

The Italian eagerly took the bills and put them in his pocket.

"Signor, I thank youa deeply," he exclaimed.

"Don't mention it, Pippo, don't mention it."

"I hope youa notit de believe de boy is bada treat."

"No, indeed. You have him in school you told me?"

"Si signor, de gooda school in New York."

"You dress and feed him well?"

"He weara de fine clothes, an' he hava de gooda food alla time. *Cospetto*, he livit lika de prince."

"Good! I'm glad to hear that. He was well reared, you know, and I cannot afford to slight him in any way."

"No, signor," declared Pippo. "I maka de treata him lika my owna child. He lof me very much. He say I ama de father to him. *Per bacco*, you should seea de boy."

"Good! Good! I knew I could trust you."

"Witha de life, signor."

"I may want to send him away at any moment. For that reason you must take good care of him. He must look like a little gentleman when he goes away."

"Youa leava dat to me. I so gooda de boy he constant exclaim I de besta man he find. You see."

The stout man nodded and smiled.

He was evidently pleased at what he heard, but he was looking at the padrone with a hard, speculative expression in his eye, and he finally said:

"Do you like to earn money?"

Pippo darts a searching look at him.

He saw a queer expression on the man's face, and finally asked:

"How?"

The stout man laughed and replied:

"Never mind that now."

"Well, I once maka de work for you."

"Yes; and you did it well."

"You pay for de work?"

"Handsomely."

"Is it de sama thing?"

"Well, I'd rather not say now."

"Den listen," said Pippo, bending nearer to his patron, as a dark look crept over his face. "Fora de mon I do anytink."

"That's enough."

"Whena you want to see me?"

"To-morrow night at the Cosmopolitan."

"Eight o'clock?"

"That will do."

"I be dere, signor."

"Good! Now I—ha! What's that?"

Pippo looked startled, and glanced nervously around.

"What?" he demanded breathlessly.

Part of Jack's body was projecting from the end of the bar where he was crouching, and the stout man pointed at it and said:

"Can that be an eavesdropper?"

"Somebod' makit de listen?" asked Pippo, with a scowl.

"Yes."

"I see."

"No. Let me."

He quietly arose.

Quietly approaching the boy, he suddenly pounced upon him.

Caught so suddenly, Jack gave a shout of alarm, and began to kick and yell, and struggle to get away.

It was useless.

His strength was unequal to the man's.

"I've got you!" exclaimed his captor, pulling him out.

"Let me go!" screamed the boy.

"Come out here."

"No! No!——"

"You must!"

He dragged the little fellow into the light.

As he did so, a hoarse cry of astonishment escaped him.

"Marco!" he roared.

"Oh, Mr. Dorgali, do not hurt me."

"Such a wretched, beggarly-looking creature!"

He glared at Pippo, who rose pale and trembling, and muttered:

"I'm exposed."

For a moment there was a deep silence.

The people in the room looked on in silent curiosity, and the man glared at Pippo again and cried fiercely:

"Is this the way you have been keeping the boy, you liar?"

"No, no, signor. Hea only——"

"Is this the good clothing? Does he look as if he got good food? Where does the schooling come in? Why, you beast, he is a beggar—a bootblack—a poor, ragged, unkempt object of pity. The money I give is never expended on him. You have been shamefully cheating me and lying infamously."

"Signor——" faltered Pippo.

"Shut up, you villain."

"But I tella you——"

"You'll tell me nothing. The appearance of the boy tells the whole tale. See here, Marco, isn't he a liar?"

"Yes, Signor Dorgali," replied the boy. "He beats, starves, and works me to death. I'm a wreck. I cannot stand his abuse much longer. For pity's sake don't leave me with him any longer."

"I won't."

Pippo's face was a study.

He glared at the boy and roared:

"You nota speakit de truth."

"I do!" stoutly answered the boy.

"You saya more, an' I killa you!"

"Bah!" replied the little fellow in contempt.

Pippo lost his temper and rushed savagely at his victim. Mr. Dorgali sprang between the pair, and waving his hand, he cried:

"Back! You won't hurt him while I'm here."

The padrone paused and cried:

"Wait till I geta him home!"

"You'll never get him back there."

"No?"

"No!"

A sarcastic smile crossed Pippo's face.

"We seea dat!" he exclaimed in cool tones. "You giba me back de boy, or I'll tell all I know about you!"

"Is that a threat?"

"Yes!"

A deathly silence prevailed.

The Bradys stood near, and were taking in the whole scene.

They heard all that was said and realized they had before them the fugitive criminal for whom Mora had been looking.

Pippo had given that fact away.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DUEL WITH KNIVES.

"Harry!" whispered Old King Brady. "Did you hear that?"

"Every word," replied the boy nodding.

"He is Dorgali."

"Yes."

"The boy is Marco Villanova."

"Undoubtedly."

"Pippo is a hireling of Dorgali's."

"Heaven knows what villainy he may have done."

"I can gues what they referred to."

"What?"

"It's my impression that Pippo killed Mora, the detective."

"Thunder! At Dorgali's command?"

"Yes—for money, of course."

"But we can't prove it?"

"Not yet. But we shall."

"Great Scott! Can it be possible?"

"Bear these facts in mind. When you chased the criminal he led you directly to Pippo's house. Like Pippo, he was poorly attired and had a beard. Do you follow me?"

"Yes, yes. I never suspected him."

"In a word, Harry, we've got before us the three principal living actors in that mysterious tragedy."

"I believe you."

"You remember our investigations of Mora's actions?"

"Distinctly."

"When he left his hotel, he was seen by a man whose looks fit the description of Dorgali in the hotel corridor. This man vanished. It was a man tallying with Pippo's looks who was afterward on guard outside the hotel, and followed the detective down town in the cars, wasn't it?"

"Yes."

"Then here we have a solution of the mystery, when we couple it with what we heard those rascals saying——"

"Hark! They are going to speak again."

The detectives sat down at a table behind a screen just as Dorgali, with a furious look on his white face, said to the padrone:

"So you threaten me."

"Signor," replied Pippo, who by this time had recovered his composure to some extent, "youa takit da bread an' da but' froma de moutha de poor Italia mans, an' fora de lies of de boy only. Me nota likea dat. I hava you, an' ave Santissima, I holdit youa fast. What I do? Starve? No! Youa say wana ting, Signor Dorgali, an' poor Pippo he goa de jail. But not alone. Youa go too. An' whena dey makit de trial, somea wan finda you de gooda signor who pay de poora man to doa de job, an' you hang, while I goa free!"

Dorgali was wild.

With difficulty he restrained his wrath.

Looking at the man from under his lowering brows, he asked:

"Then if I let you keep the boy, you will keep a still tongue?"

"Si, signor."

"If I don't, you'll squeal?"

"Si, signor."

"Even at the risk of your life?"

"At any risk."

Dorgali's face kept darkening.

His passion was rising beyond control.

The perfidy of his accomplice was maddening to him.

He snapped his teeth together, and suddenly drew a dagger from his pocket, leaped at Pippo and caught him by the throat.

A hoarse cry escaped the padrone.

"Leava go!" he gasped.

"Not till I kill you!" Dorgali answered.

"Two cana do dat!"

And, as Pippo spoke, he too drew a dangerous-looking knife from the folds of the red silk sash he wore bound around his waist.

As the two blades flashed in the air, Jack dashed away.

"Police!" he shouted.

"A fight!" cried the inmates of the barroom.

They rose to their feet excitedly, and a babel of voices rang out.

Dorgali, with lightning-like rapidity, seized Pippo's knife hand, and the padrone caught him the same way.

Neither could strike.

They strove to gain the liberty of their hands.

It was in vain.

Well knowing that their lives depended upon the strength and tenacity with which they clung to each other, they fought desperately to retain the advantage they had gained.

Seeing the dangerous turn events were taking, the Bradys now bounded to their feet.

"They'll kill each other," Harry muttered.

"Not if we can stop them," replied his partner.

"By Jove, they have their bad blood aroused."

"Yes, indeed. See them struggle."

"They are falling, now."

Over pitched the two men heavily upon the floor, still fighting like a pair of bulldogs to gain the mastery of each other.

Just then one of the loungers cried:

"There goes that boy out the door yelling for the police. He will soon have the bluecoats swarming in here about our ears like a lot of hornets!"

"Put out the lights!" advised another.

They did not wait to turn them out, but hurled beer glasses and everything else that came handy, at the lights.

Crash—bang—jingle!

The broken lamps struck the floor.

In a moment the place was in gloom.

"Stop that, or we'll arrest you!" cried Old King Brady, in a desperate but futile effort to keep the lamps lit.

But he spoke too late.

The mischief was done.

Hearing his words, and realizing that there were officers in the room, the Italians expected to get arrested.

To escape, they rushed for the door.

Out they went pellmell.

They were in wild disorder, and upset tables and chairs in their frantic rush for a place of safety.

The Bradys paid no heed to them.

It was only the combatants they wanted.

Pausing, Old King Brady panted.

"Got a match, Harry?"

"Yes," the boy replied.

"Give it to me till I light my lamp."

This was done.

When the detective's bull's-eye lantern shot forth its dazzling beam of light, he flashed it around the floor in search of the two duellists whom he was anxious to arrest.

The room was deserted.

Dorgali and Pippo had gone out with the rest.

Fear of the police incited them to separate, rise, and forgetting their animosity, flee from the place.

The Bradys searched all over the saloon, and, finding that not a soul but themselves occupied the room, Harry said drily:

"Both escaped."

"What a pity!"

"But we've one satisfaction."

"And that?"

"We know where Dorgali puts up."

"At the Continental Hotel?"

"Yes. We can go up there now, and look for him."

"I wonder if they stabbed each other?"

"That's a mystery. I see no blood, so infer that they didn't."

They hastened from the saloon.

Some of the loungers, who had been in the saloon when the fracas began, were hiding in adjacent halls and alleys, and were peeping out at the pair as they emerged.

When the old detective noted this, he asked:

"Could they be among those skulkers?"

"I doubt it," replied Young King Brady.

"Then we won't molest them."

They hurried over to the Bowery, boarded a 4th avenue car and rode uptown to 20th street.

Crossing over to Broadway, they passed into the big hotel on the corner, and spoke to the clerk.

A good, concise description of Dorgali was given to him, and Old King Brady asked him:

"Is such a person stopping here?"

"No," was the staggering reply.

"Are you sure?"

"Positive."

Old King Brady glanced at Harry in blank dismay.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DETECTIVES ON THE TRAIL.

It was evident that Dorgali was not a guest at the hotel. But it struck them that he must have had some intention of going there on the following night.

As they walked up Broadway to Madison Square, Harry said:

"Let the matter rest for to-night. We can return to-morrow night and perhaps find him here."

"It struck me that he intends to come to this hotel," said Old King Brady, reflectively. "The man is evidently putting up at good houses, and we have seen that he has money to pay Pippo for keeping young Villanova in bondage. That of course means that he isn't bankrupt."

"Perhaps he failed into his own pocket, when in Sicily."

"Such is my firm belief."

"Armed with plenty of money, he will prove a formidable foe."

"Yes, a rich man is harder to fight than a poor one."

"As for Pippo, we can easily reach him."

"It's a question about the boy, Harry."

"In what way?"

"He isn't apt to go back to Mulberry Bend."

"No."

"Nor will he be with Dorgali."

"We'll have to find him in the street."

"Yes. But where?"

Harry shrugged his shoulders.

"Who knows?" he muttered, blankly. "Trust to luck."

"There's a way to locate him, I think."

"How?"

"By asking some of the boy slaves with whom he has been living at Pippo's house."

"Of course. That's a fact. We can try it."

Just then several boys ran up to the detectives.

"Shine? Shine, sir?" cried one of them, eagerly.

"Bootblacks!" laughed Harry.

"Yes. Some of Pippo's little slaves."

Just at this moment one of the boys recognized the detectives.

"Cheese it, fellows!" he cried, in alarm. "It's dem guys wot wur at Pippo's, askin' us ter go ter de Gerry S'ciety."

This warning acted like magic.

They fled like a flock of frightened sheep.

Both detectives laughed heartily.

"Afraid of us," grimly said the old detective.

"Well, I'm sure we wouldn't hurt the poor little chaps."

The detectives went home.

Late the following afternoon, they went down to Mulberry street, disguised as a couple of countrymen.

Upon nearing the Bend, they caught view of a bootblack whom they at once recognized as one of Jack's little friends.

The boy did not recognize the detectives in the disguise they wore, and the Bradys were thus enabled to draw quite near him.

"Hey, Bub," cried Harry, "give us a shine, will yer?"

"Orright sir," quickly replied the pleased boy, running over to him, setting down his box, and starting to polish Harry's shoes.

The young detective patiently waited until the boy had got well to work, and then he asked him:

"Say, do you know a bootblack named Jack, who lives around here?"

"Certain'y," replied the boy. "Do yer know him, mister?"

"He always shines my shoes. Where is he?"

The bootblack made no reply.

Harry repeated the question, and the boy looked up and said:

"I dunno."

"Don't he live somewhere around here?"

"He used to."

"Moved?"

"Ran away from home."

"When?"

"Yesterday, and ther boss is wild."

"Where did he go?"

"Search me."

"Do you mean to say he didn't come home to supper?"

"Yep. Dat's wot happened, all right, all right."

"So Jack's gone. Well, well! Wasn't his boss a man named Pippo?"

"Dat's de guy."

"Any more boys going to run away from him?"

"Wouldn't be s'prised if dey did," answered the boy, with a scowl.

"Then all of you hate Pippo?"

"Yer kin bet we do, boss. But we dassent say nuthin', or we'd hang de heads off of us. Dat's what."

He finished his job, was paid, and ran away whistling.

When he was gone, Young King Brady said to his partner:

"Jack has kicked over the traces and run away from the padrone. That's evident. I'm sorry to hear it. Still we may run him down and see that he gets his inheritance."

"Our best course will be to nab Pippo first, pump him about the murder of Mora, and if we find that he was the guilty party who worked in the interests of Dorgali, we can

put the nippers on him and punish him here, for his part in that crime. Then we can laud Dorgali and ship him to Italy to answer for his crimes there of killing the Count Villanova and his wife Bianca."

"Shall we go to Pippo's house now?"

"By all means. He's almost sure to be in."

With this purpose in view, the two detectives hastened away and finally reached Mulberry Bend.

They went straight through the alley to the rear house, and while crossing the courtyard, they heard a boy shrieking with pain.

"Oh, Pippo," he was crying, "don't beat me! Don't beat me."

"You de lazy loafer. Youa not work. Playa de craps, an' no trya de maka wan gooda living. Now I nota say no more, but beata de life out. Taka dat—an' dat—an' dat!"

Each word was accompanied by a cruel blow.

The wretch ruled his poor little victims with an iron hand.

It was his policy to keep them in subjection by the force of fear, as he firmly believed he could get more work out of them that way.

Never did he spare the rod.

Beatings were common.

The Bradys went into the hall and burst the door open.

A scene of excitement met their gaze.

Pippo, armed with his rawhide whip was racing around the room after a puny little fellow in ragged clothing.

At every step he cut the boy across the body with the lash, wringing cries and groans of deep anguish from his poor little victim. It was pitiful.

"Dog!" shouted Harry, indignantly.

Startled, Pippo paused.

The boy dashed out the door.

"De detectives!" gasped the man in horror.

"You are my prisoner!" said Harry, advancing.

The Italian uttered a harsh laugh, and retreated muttering:

"I you prisoner, when you geta me, signor."

"Won't you submit quietly?"

"No!" roared Pippo.

"See if this will persuade you then," said Young King Brady, and he leaped forward and drove his fist against Pippo's jaw.

It was a knockout blow, pure and simple.

Catching the Italian on a vital spot, he went down and lay stunned long enough for the boy to handcuff him.

Old King Brady looked on with an amused smile.

"That's a funny way to arrest a man," he remarked.

"But it's effective," laughed Harry.

"He's coming to his senses, now."

"So much the better."

Pippo finally got up, feeling sore and dazed.

He saw how he was caught, and gasped in hoarse tones of dismay:

"Caught."

"Yes," said Harry.

"Whata de charge?"

"Murder!"

"What?" roared the startled Italian. "Who?"

"Antonio Mora, the Italian detective."

Pippo almost fainted from fright.

He glared at his accuser like a wild beast for a moment, and asked:

"Who say I killa dat man?"

"We do."

"You lie!"

"Oh, we saw you."

"Why I should do dat?"

"Because Luigi Dorgali paid you to do it."

A suppressed cry of fear escaped the padrone, his eyes bulged and as a deathly pallor overspread his dark face, he cried fiercely:

"No—no—no! It's a lie! It's a lie!"

"We'll find out about that!" firmly answered Harry.

CHAPTER IX.

CAUGHT IN A NET.

Pippo was in a terrible state of nervous anxiety. It made a cold sweat burst out all over him. The detectives terrified him.

Seeing the frame of mind he was in, Harry exclaimed:

"Why don't you make a clean breast of it, old man?"

"Me nota got nothing to say," sullenly answered the padrone.

"Then you prefer to pay the penalty of Dorgali's crimes, eh?"

"Wha' you means?"

"Just this: If Dorgali hired you to kill the Neapolitan detective, he would be the guilty party who would have to pay for it. As you disclaim he is implicated, and want to take all the blame upon yourself, of course you'll suffer it, and Dorgali will go free!"

A look of alarm crossed the padrone's face.

This was a view of the case he had never taken.

He did not want to perish for another man, and a panic seized him.

"Leta me go!" he exclaimed. "Pippo nota die for Dorgali."

"Then you admit that Dorgali paid you to kill Mora?"

"Yes."

A look of triumph flashed over Harry's face.

"Then tell us where to find Dorgali."

"Soma hospital."

"Why—did you injure him in that duel?"

"Me runa de knife ina de bod'." said the lying Italian.

"And wasn't you hurt?"

"No."

The detectives were delighted.

Neither expected much trouble to find the Italian banker now.

"The whole thing is as plain as daylight," remarked Old

King Brady, smilingly. "Dorgali hired this man to put his enemy out of the way, and Pippo is the real criminal."

"That ends the mystery about the matter," replied Harry.

"You leta me go now?" demanded Pippo, expectantly.

"No. We have got to lock you up."

"Wha'!" roared the astonished padrone.

He fully expected to be liberated the moment he told the officers that Dorgali had paid him to kill Mora. It was because he was a very ignorant man that he believed he had vindicated himself, and had thrown all the blame upon his employer.

The Bradys did not agree with his idea.

Observing his error, Harry said to him:

"You've made a mistake, Pippo. We ain't going to liberate you."

"Why not?" asked the astonished padrone. "Didn' me tella you dat Dorgali de mang what wanta de Mora killed? I no wanta him dead, signor. Pippo nota hate data mang."

"You are the criminal, just the same."

"An' you bringa me de pris'?"

"Yes, indeed," said Harry, cheerfully. "The information you gave us will make it go hard with Dorgali, too."

Pippo got ugly.

He realized that he had not cleared himself, but merely had implicated himself with his employer.

A wicked look shot from his black eyes.

He vented a shrill whistle.

The Bradys became suspicious of it, and the old detective asked:

"What did you do that for?"

"Fun," replied the Italian.

"You are up to some mischief."

"How I maka do somesing disa way?" demanded Pippo, as he held out his manacled wrists. "Brady, youa de craze."

As these words left his lips, a dark object suddenly shot in through one of the open windows and darted toward Old King Brady.

It was a big net.

As it fell over the officer's head, he became entangled in it.

Harry leaped aside but just then a rifle shot was heard, and the ball grazed the boy's left temple.

The shot came from the hallway.

It did not hurt the boy, but it warned him that he was the mark of a hidden assassin.

He therefore sprang at Pippo.

Harry intended to use him as a shield.

The Italian realized his motive and darted aside.

Thrusting out his foot he so placed it in Harry's way that the boy stumbled over it.

Down to the floor he went with a crash.

Pippo rushed out the door into the hall and vanished, leaving Old King Brady struggling furiously to disentangle himself from the big net.

Young King Brady arose.

Just as he got upon his feet he saw several people in the hall and in the yard.

It was one of them, who, in answer to Pippo's warning whistle, had flung in the net, enveloping Old King Brady, while another, coming with a rifle, shot at Harry.

The latter person was an old Italian ragpicker, and he now rested his elbow on the window sill, took accurate aim at Old King Brady, and was upon the point of firing and killing the helpless officer.

Crack—bang!

It was Harry's pistol.

The ball struck the ragpicker ere he could fire.

With a wild yell of pain he dropped the rifle, and fled with a bullet in his shoulder.

"Good shot!" exclaimed Old King Brady.

"Stand still and I'll aid you to get rid of that net."

"You'd better hurry, my boy. The others are coming."

"They'll get a warm reception."

He seized the net, and gave it a fling, throwing one side over his partner's head. Then he turned it back again.

Harry had almost liberated his partner, when the whole gang of Italians came rushing in, armed with clubs.

The young detective raised his pistol.

To his alarm he saw there were no more cartridges in it, and he cried to his partner:

"I can't do anything."

"Aid me, Harry."

One more heave and the net was off.

But in the moment lost, the advancing crowd reached them.

"Back with you!" Harry shouted.

"Use your fists!" Old King Brady advised.

They paid no heed to the stinging blows rained upon their bodies by the infuriated mob.

But they pitched into them with their fists, and struck out right and left, with great strength and rare courage.

It was manifest to them that Pippo's signal told these vengeful friends of his what the detectives were.

Moreover, the fierceness of their attack showed how much they hated officers of the law.

In addition, the detectives calculated that they were all leagued together in one powerful society like the Mafia, and were bound to protect one another from the police, at any cost.

This would account for these perfectly disinterested people taking part in an attack against two men who never injured them.

So many of them were now pitted against the two gallant detectives, that it looked as if the Bradys would become overwhelmed by sheer force of numbers, and beaten to death.

At this critical juncture a remarkable thing occurred.

In the yard there sounded a shout, and the patter of flying footsteps.

Then the noise sounded in the hall.

"This way, fellows!" cried a well-known voice.

"Go on, Jack."

"Go fer 'em, Jack!"

Such were the answering cries in boyish voices.

The startled detectives glanced toward the door which

now flew open with a bang, and in rushed a dozen bootblacks, headed by the very boy the detectives were after.

Swinging their kits by the straps, they let them fly at the heads of the detectives' assailants.

"The boy slaves of 'Little Italy!'" gasped Old King Brady.

"They're aiding us, too!" replied Harry.

A wild yell arose from the detectives' enemies when they found themselves attacked by the bootblacks.

Many a head was painfully banged with those wooden kits, and many a man was knocked down by a plucky boy.

The diversion drew the Italians' attention away from the Bradys, and Old King Brady had time then to pull his pistol from his pocket.

CHAPTER X.

FINDING THE MISSING BOY.

"Clear out of here, confound you!" roared Old King Brady.

And bang! went his revolver.

There was a wild rush and scramble among the Italians, and as some of the plucky bootblacks took fright too, Harry yelled at them:

"Stop, boys, we only mean it for those men."

Jack understood the situation too. He was quick to act. In Italian he shouted an order to his little companions and with one accord they paused.

Bang! went Old King Brady's pistol again, and like the former shot, he sent the bullet flying over their heads.

The detectives' enemies fled in wild alarm.

"Go for them, fellows!" cried Jack.

Then again the blacking kits struck the flying rascals and many of them afterward nursed broken heads and bruised bodies.

With rare courage the boys charged on them under the leadership of Jack, and they were driven from the house.

"It's useless to stay here now, Harry," said Old King Brady.

"Perfectly," assented the boy, with a nod.

"Then follow the boys."

"By Jove, they are giving those fellows an awful beating!"

"They seem to be mad."

"It's a revolt, you can depend."

The detectives rushed out after the crowd, and saw the gang scattering in all directions.

When the Bradys reached the street, they found Jack and his little band of warriors standing on the sidewalk excitedly discussing the fight in their native language.

Harry tapped Jack on the arm.

"I want to talk to you," said the young detective. "It is something of great importance too."

"About the fight?" laughed the boy. "Well, we licked them well, didn't we?"

"They could not have had a better drubbing," chuckled Harry. "You boys gave it to them well. I'm delighted with you. How in the world did you happen to arrive at such a lucky moment? And what possessed you to pitch into those fellows as you did?"

"Well," said the boy, soberly, "I'll tell you. You know how I ran away from old Pippo, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, you know how he beat me?"

"Of course we do."

"It struck me I was foolish to put up with his abuse. I learned that he had all along been paid a good, round sum to keep me like a gentleman. Instead of that, he pocketed the money and made a slave of me like the rest of the boys."

"I'm aware of that, too. We heard it in the Baxter street saloon."

"Well," said Jack, "that's why I ran away. I hid, and afterward I met the other boys living at the padrone's, and told them they were fools to put up with his abuse any longer."

"Stirred up a rebellion, eh?"

"That's it, exactly. They all agreed to quit him and stick to me."

"Good for you."

"Well, besides that, we made up our minds to come back here and tell him we were on a strike. If he attempted to lick us again we resolved to all pitch into him and give him the worst beating he ever had, to pay him off for the way he abused us in the past."

"You wanted revenge?"

"Certainly, we did. When we got here, we found a fight going on. In those rigs we didn't know you, of course, but we saw it was a big crowd against two, and took the part of the weakest crowd."

"And we were mighty glad you did."

"That's how we happened to come to your aid."

"And now, what are you going to do?"

"Why, we are going to keep on blacking boots, and chip in and fix up a house where we can all live together."

"That's a good plan for the rest, but not for you."

"Why ain't I in it?"

"Simply because there's no need for you to be. Now I want you to understand that we know all about your private history."

"You do?" demanded the boy, in astonishment.

"Everything. Why did you conceal your identity before?"

"Because the padrone made me. He swore that if I didn't assume the name he gave me, and pretend to be a poor boy, he'd murder me."

"Kept you terrified?"

"Yes, the same as he did the other boys."

"But now you've lost all fear of him?"

"Of course I have."

"Will you answer me a few questions?"

"Certainly."

"Isn't your real name Marco Villanova?"

"Yes, sir."

"Your father and mother were killed in Sicily?"

"They were. My mother was poisoned by eating candies sent to her by mail by a pretended friend in Messina."

"And when your father suspected an old enemy of his, named Luigi Dorgali, who lived there, he left Palermo, went there to investigate, and was stabbed by an assassin."

"Yes. But how do you know all this?"

"An Italian detective named Mora told me. Do you know him?"

"I've heard Pippo mention Mora's name."

"I see. Well, when your father was killed, his huge fortune and the title of count were inherited by you."

"I presume so."

"Now how came you to speak English so well?"

"I learned it in school."

"And how did you happen to come to America with Dorgali?"

"He came to my home and told me a lie. He said the assassins were after me—that my father sent him after me—told him to take me out of the country. I was scared and went with him. I didn't know who he was till we reached America."

"How came he to tell you?"

"He was acquainted with Pippo in Italy, and brought me straight to his house. There he told me he had abducted me—hated me because I was the child of his rival—and that I would never see Italy or parents again. Then he went away. I afterward learned that he was paying Pippo to keep me in seclusion."

"Pippo is a murderer."

"How do you know that?"

"Dorgali was pursued by a detective for murdering your parents, and he paid Pippo to kill Mora, the detective."

"Ah! That name of Mora."

"You've heard it before, you said, Jack."

"I have. One night Dorgali came to the house. He had a letter from a friend in Sicily. He read it to Pippo. I overheard it. The letter warned Dorgali to be on his guard—that Mora was coming after him—that Mora would put up at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. They held a long whispered conference. I suppose they were then plotting to put the detective out of the way."

"Without a doubt."

"Poor fellow. I'm sorry they killed him."

"We shall arrest them, and make the wicked pair pay the penalty of their crimes," declared Harry. "Meantime, we are going to put you in the hands of the Italian Consul. He will return you to your own country and see that you get your rights."

"Good!" cried Marco—as we must now call the boy—and the pleasure beaming all over his face, showed how glad he was at the prospect of returning to the land of his birth. "When?"

"To-night."

"No. I can't do that. Leave it until to-morrow."

"Why?"

"Because I've got to take the boys to our new quarters to-

night, and get their new home in good working order before I leave the poor fellows for good. I'll meet you any time and place you set."

"Very well. We will call for you. Tell us your new address."

"No. 200 Mulberry street."

"Very well," said Young King Brady. "We shall be there to-morrow morning about nine o'clock, to take you to the consul's."

"And I'll be ready," declared Marco.

The rest of the boys had been looking on and listening attentively to what they said, and none of them looked over pleased.

"Are we going to lose you?" one asked the boy.

"Yes, but you can get along just as well without me," replied the boy. "Come along now, fellows."

They all wished the detectives good-by.

Following Marco, they went trooping along the Bend.

When they were gone, Harry laughed, and said to Old King Brady:

"Our call here has not been fruitless. Although we have lost Pippo, we've found the boy, and it won't be long ere we gather in the two villains who are at the bottom of all this treachery."

"We may meet Dorgali to-night," replied the old detective.

CHAPTER XI.

AT THE BOYS' NEW HOME.

As the Bradys thought Luigi Dorgali would go to the Continental Hotel that night, they boarded a Broadway car and rode uptown.

Reaching their destination at eight o'clock, they approached the clerk again, and questioned him about the Italian.

"A person of that description registered here this evening," said the clerk.

"Indeed! And is he here now?" queried Old King Brady, expectantly, as he took a chew of tobacco and glanced at the register.

"No. He went out, hired a cab, and drove away."

"Did he say at what hour he would return?"

"He didn't."

"Then we will wait for him."

"Perhaps his driver could tell you where he went."

"Where is the driver?"

"On that hack standing outside the door."

"Ah! Then he returned?"

"Yes; a few minutes ago."

The Bradys went out.

Approaching the driver, Harry addressed him with:

"Boy?"

"No, sir. Want a cab?"

"We do."

"Get in, sir."

"Wait. We wish to speak to you."

"About what?"

"Do you recollect taking a gentleman from here to-night?"

"Oh, yes; very well."

"Where did you drive him to?"

"Over to a concert hall on the Bowery."

"Did he go in?"

"Yes; and then dismissed me."

"How long ago?"

"About half an hour."

"Take us to the same place, at once."

Entering the cab, they were driven away rapidly.

They soon reached their destination, and told the driver to wait.

Going inside, they glanced around at the motley assemblage in the audience, but failed to see their man.

A waiter stood near the door.

Harry shook his head.

"Gone," he commented.

"Yes," asserted Old King Brady, in disgust.

"I may learn where."

He approached the waiter at the door and asked him:

"Did you see a short, stout man with a dark mustache just quit here?"

"A furriner—a dago?" demanded the waiter.

"Yes."

"Came in a cab?"

"That's the man."

"I got him a cab just now."

"You did? Where did he go?"

"Oh, I heard him tell the driver to go to No. 200 Mulberry street."

Harry looked startled. That was the address of the boy slaves of "Little Italy." It filled the boy with some alarm.

"Are you sure?" he demanded.

"Certain'y I am. He ain't b'en garn five minutes."

The detectives glanced significantly at each other, and reading what was passing in each other's mind, they hurriedly departed. Springing into their waiting cab, they gave the driver the address.

It was a short ride.

The building was a dilapidated old tenement house, some of the inmates of which were sleeping on the fire escapes.

No sign of a cab was in sight.

A boy stood in the doorway whom Harry recognized at once as one of Marco's little chums, and the boy knew the detective at once.

"Hello," said Harry. "What are you doing here?"

"Waiting for Tim to come back," answered the boot-black.

"And where did he go?"

"Ran after a cab Jack rode in."

"Jack rode away in a cab?"

"Yes. Just now. He was asleep."

"How did he happen to get into that carriage?"

"Why, a few minutes ago that gentleman came into our

rooms who used to call on Pippo. He jumped at Jack, and pressed a wet handkerchief against Jack's face, and he fell asleep."

"Chloroform," commented Old King Brady.

"No doubt," Harry assented.

"Well, we didn't say anything, and the gentleman lifted Jack in his arms, carried him out, and put him in a cab. Tim thought something wrong had happened. So he ran after the carriage."

"Is he going to return here?"

"Yes; as soon as he finds out where the man brought Jack."

"I see. We'll wait for him too."

They told their driver to wait.

Old King Brady then asked the little Italian:

"Will you let us see your new home?"

"I don't mind. It's on the top floor though."

"That don't make any difference. Lead the way up."

The boy complied, and reaching the top, he opened a door and revealed a poorly-furnished room, lit by a lamp.

It was occupied by most of Marco's little friends. Some were eating a frugal supper at the table. Others were shooting craps on the floor, and a third group was lying on some cots in the next room.

The Bradys glanced around searchingly.

"It's a poor home, but a better one than they had at Pippo's," the old detective commented. "They all look happy."

The boys all glanced up at the detectives and saluted them.

"Glad ter see yer, gents," said one.

"They've called to see Jack," announced the Bradys' guide.

"Sit down," said another boy, pushing two chairs forward.

The detectives complied.

They spent an hour chatting with the boys.

All were cheerful and hopeful of getting along without Pippo.

One of them said:

"Why, we're better off than we was before."

"In what way?" Old King Brady asked, smilingly.

"There's twelve of us. We each make about a dollar a day. That's twelve dollars a day. It only costs us each about fifty cents a day to live. So you see at the end of the week we each have over three dollars for spending money. Before we had nothing but starvation and beatings."

The old detective nodded, and added:

"And now you are your own bosses. That's better yet."

"You bet," cheerfully replied the little fellow. "It makes us feel more like living and working."

The detective liked his independent spirit, and he asked:

"Deprived of thirty or forty dollars per week, what will Pippo do now?"

"I don't know. He's a gambler, and hasn't got a cent. With no money coming in, he will get desperate, I suppose, and go back to his old life of robbery. He was a brigand in Italy, I'm told."

The Bradys laughed outright upon hearing this, and the old detective said:

"Oh, no; I guess he won't do much more crooked work. He can't go around long with a pair of handcuffs on his wrists before we will have him located, my boy."

"Anyway," said the bootblack, "it won't do for him to meet any of us. Once he got his hands on us, we'd never get away without a beating."

"You must keep a sharp lookout for him."

"That's just what we are doing."

At this moment footsteps were heard coming up the stairs, and a moment later a breathless, barefoot boy, clad in rags, entered.

"Hello, Tim, what's the news?" cried one of the crowd.

"I follered ther cab wot took Jack away," explained the boy, darting an inquiring glance at the detectives.

"Where did it lead you to?"

"Ther East River, foot of Canal street."

"Anything happen?"

"Yes. When that man lifted Jack out he was still asleep. Ther guy put him in a rowboat and rowed up into the big sewer."

"Into the sewer?"

"Exactly. They didn't come out, neither."

"Did you wait to see?"

"Of course I did."

"Why did they go into the sewer?"

"I'm blest if I know. Anyway, they're up there yet somewhere. But I guess the sewer gas will kill them soon."

The Bradys were startled.

"What did this erratic move on Dorgali's part mean?" they asked themselves. "Had he taken the boy into the sewer to kill him?" It seemed fair to presume so.

But they resolved to make sure of it.

CHAPTER XII.

IN THE SEWER.

When the detectives thought over what Tim said, Harry remarked in low tones, so the boys could not hear him:

"Come down to the river."

"You mean to pursue them?"

"That's the plan, exactly."

"I'm ready. We may run him into a trap."

As they started for the door, one of the boys asked pleadingly:

"Say, Mr. Brady, ain't yer goin' ter help us find poor Jack?"

"Yes," replied the old detective, in kindly tones. "we are going after him now."

"Hurrah!" cried the boy, brightening up.

"Brava! Hooray!" yelled the rest, in wild delight.

They had been sad and depressed over "Jack's" fate, and none knew just exactly what to do to aid their little friend. It encouraged them to hear the detective's declaration

With such aid, they felt sure their chum would be saved from his enemy, and every one was eager to lend a helping hand.

"No—no. We don't need you, boys," said Old King Brady. "We can get along better without you, just now."

"If yer saves him, will yer let us know?" asked Tim, wistfully.

"Yes, indeed."

"D'yer know anything 'bout that sewer?"

"We know it's a big one."

"One o' ther largest in ther city. Yer could drive a horse an' wagon through it, Mr. Brady."

"How do you know?"

"'Cause us fellers often goes swimmin' down near there, an' has been up inside of it," replied Tim.

"Very dark, ain't it?"

"Yes, after yer gets in a ways."

"Well, we will leave you now."

The detectives hastened out, followed by the kind wishes of the boys, and hastened up to Canal street where they boarded a car.

They were carried over to the west side of the city.

Here they hunted about the river front for a skiff, and finally hired one from a man on a nearby freight schooner.

When they got in and Old King Brady rowed away, Harry asked him:

"Have you got your dark lantern with you?"

"No," replied the old detective.

"Never mind. I've got mine."

"We have a ship's lantern here."

"I'll light it."

When this was done, Harry hung it in the bow of the boat.

The skiff forged slowly along close to the piers and bulkheads to keep out of the swift, powerful tide running out.

It was very gloomy out on the river.

Few boats were passing.

The ships along the docks were straining at their cables, and a forest of masts and maze of rigging towered high above the water.

Harry sat in the bow where the water was rippling, and his partner pulled ahead with slow but strong strokes.

They made slow headway.

A tug passed by, the wash making their skiff rock and tumble, and some of the spray splattered up over them.

Several times they saw the watchmen on the ships peering down at them from the high decks, while passing the big vessels.

In a short time, Harry exclaimed:

"There it is!"

He pointed ahead, and Old King Brady saw the cavernous mouth of the huge sewer looming up in the bulkhead.

The tide was flowing into it.

"Pull on your right oar!" said the boy.

The skiff swung around as Old King Brady complied, and then:

"There!" Harry continued. "That will do. Straight ahead now."

As the prow was steered straight at the yawning opening, the boat glided straight into the big sewer.

In a moment more they were bucking the sluggish tide of this great artery of lower New York.

It was built over a natural creek, the outflowing of which materially helped to keep the foul sewage cleared by washing the filth out into the North River.

A strange and disagreeable odor assailed their nostrils, and the lantern showed them the old rotting arched brickwork on all sides and overhead reeking with scum.

"There's plenty of room to row," said Old King Brady.

"Yes. Is the water deep?"

The detective thrust down an oar.

"At this point there's fully four feet."

"Not enough to drown us."

"By no means. But I'd hate to stir up the deposit on the bottom."

"Don't. The stench here is appalling now. You'd make it worse if you disturb the sediment. No wonder that boot-black said the sewer gas might kill Dorgali and his prisoner."

Old King Brady was thinking.

He finally muttered:

"I hope the Italian didn't bring the boy here to kill him. It's a fit place for such a deed. No one would be any the wiser, as he would remain unseen, under ground here."

"He swore to kill the boy in his vendetta."

"Perhaps his avarice may prevent such a deed."

"In what way?"

"Have you forgotten the boy's fortune?"

"Oh! You refer to Dorgali's plan to get possession of it through the boy. He couldn't do that if Marco was dead. That's certain."

Old King Brady nodded, and said:

"That's true. He will take great care not to injure the goose that lays the golden egg. I don't believe the boy's life is in danger."

Just then they observed a spur in the sewer.

It was an old branch which opened in the north wall, coming from the direction of Renwick street, which is only one block long.

Old King Brady rested on his oars.

He gazed at the opening a moment, and then exclaimed:

"Hark!"

"What do you hear?"

"Voices."

"Coming from the spur?"

"Yes."

Harry listened.

A moment of silence passed.

Then he distinctly heard a distant hum, and asked:

"Can that be the one we want?"

"Who else would be in the sewer?"

"Run her into that opening."

"It's too narrow to row through."

"Give me an oar and we'll pole her up."

"Put out your bow light, first."

Harry complied, and the boat was turned to the left and

glided silently into the narrower opening from whence the sounds came.

It was hard work to go ahead straight in the gloom, but they had to put up with the trouble in order to avoid being seen.

The gunwales of the skiff scraped against the walls.

The passage was somewhat curved, and they made slow progress until they had entered several hundred feet.

Suddenly a light was seen ahead.

"Stop!" gasped Harry.

The boat paused.

It was now observed that the light emanated from a large lantern in a boat, and its dimmed rays showed them a peculiar scene.

The lantern hung on a hook in the wall beside an arched opening in which a door was set; from the threshold several steps descended to the water flowing through the sewer.

A skiff was fastened to a rusty iron ring in the wall.

Upon the stairs stood Dorgali.

Against the opposite wall stood Marco, bound hand and foot, his bonds being fastened to a huge ring.

The boy was awake and sensible, and the man was aiming a revolver square at his head, and saying:

"Say your prayers, for I'm going to kill you, Marco."

"Fire, you coward!" retorted the boy, bitterly. "I don't fear death!"

"I swore to wipe out your whole breed. No one will know what became of you. I'll get your fortune anyway, through a substitute."

Marco glared at him angrily.

The boy felt a supreme contempt and disgust for this wretch.

"Proceed! Why don't you proceed?" he demanded.

There was a calm, defiant gleam in his dark eyes, and an air of sublime courage about the way he acted.

Dorgali was not impressed by it.

He was a cruel man, and wanted to torture his victim, to gloat over his mental anguish. But he soon tired of this and said:

"I'll finish you now."

He took deliberate aim at the boy's heart.

CHAPTER XIII.

FILLED BY A TRAP.

Bang! went a pistol shot, but it was not Dorgali who fired.

Young King Brady had drawn his revolver, and, taking quick aim at the Italian's hand that held the pistol, he fired.

The young detective was a dead shot.

This fact was shown by the way Dorgali dropped his pistol and grabbed his wrist, from which a tiny stream of blood trickled.

The bullet had gone clean through it.

A curse escaped the man, as he glared at his injured hand, then he swept a keen, searching glance around the sewer to see who shot him.

In the gloom, the detectives in their boat were not seen.

They remained silent.

Marco was startled, too.

He could not understand who had come to his relief at such an opportune moment. But he realized that rescuers were at hand.

"Help! Help!" he shouted.

Dorgali was writhing with pain.

"Row toward him!" whispered Harry.

"Can't. But I'll push the boat," answered Old King Brady, quickly.

As the skiff darted ahead and came into the radius of light, Dorgali saw it, and recognized the two occupants.

"By Heavens, it's the Bradys!" he groaned.

Seeing him hastily turn toward the door in the wall, Harry gasped:

"Faster! He's going to escape."

"Can't," grunted the old detective.

Harry aimed his pistol at the Italian again, and yelled excitedly:

"Stop, Dorgali, or I'll drop you!"

"Never!" panted the frantic man.

Bang! went the revolver again. Harry only gave one warning. If his man failed to heed it, he acted.

But the shot was wasted.

As quick as a flash the man darted through the door behind him, and the bullet whistled by the spot he vacated.

It was a narrow escape for him.

"He's gone!" said the boy, in disgust.

"Chase him!"

"Wait! Liberate Marco, first."

The boy stood sunk to his knees in the water when the boat glided up to him, and the young detective cut his bonds.

"Follow us, Marco," said the boy.

"Go ahead, Mr. Brady," answered the young Italian, quickly.

Over the sluggish stream went the skiff, and as the prow touched the lowest steps, Harry pulled the boat upon it.

In a moment Old King Brady followed him ashore.

They tried the door and found it securely locked or bolted, but when they struck it with their shoulders the fastenings were broken.

Open flew the door.

A cellar was revealed a few feet beyond.

It was under a little old-fashioned house in Renwick street, and the detectives plunged into it and Harry lit his lantern.

When the gloom was dispelled they gazed around.

It was an ordinary cellar, littered with mouldy boxes, broken barrels, heaps of rubbish and mildewed trash.

There was a wooden staircase at one side.

Numerous rats were darting for their holes when the officers ran in, and the tread of footfalls was heard on the floor above.

"He ain't here," the boy commented.

"Follow me up those stairs," Old King Brady answered.

They ran up, but had to smash open the door to get into the house, as Dorgali had bolted it after him.

The hall was in gloom.

Quick, nervous voices were heard in the darkness, and as the young detective flashed the rays of his lantern ahead, they caught view of several moving figures.

They were darting through a door into a room on the ground floor, and among them was Dorgali.

In the brief glimpse the detectives caught of the crowd, they observed that there were half a dozen dirty, ragged men with every appearance of Italian laborers.

"More friends of Dorgali!" said Harry.

"I'm puzzled to account for the fact that both this man and Pippo have surrounded themselves with a lot of men who are so devoted to them that they seem ready to lay down their lives for the rascals."

"Oh, its easily accounted for."

"What's your opinion?" asked Old King Brady.

"Dorgali and Pippo are leaders of a secret society of which these men are members. They are probably oath bound to protect one another."

"That's a reasonable supposition."

"Shall we follow them into that room?"

"It will be dangerous to attempt it, Harry."

"Of course. But we can't catch that lobster unless we risk it."

"Get your gun ready, then."

"I'm prepared."

They dashed forward and pushed open the door, flashed the light into a small dining room, and saw that it was empty.

All the men had mysteriously vanished.

There was a kitchen in the rear, into which they might have gone, and the Bradys darted toward the door leading into it.

Not two steps had they advanced, however, when the rope holding a beam to the ceiling, was cut by a hidden watcher, and the heavy weight fell on their heads.

Both were felled to the floor utterly senseless.

Their bodies had scarcely struck the carpet, when the Italians came swarming in from the rear room and lit the gas.

Pippo was among them, too.

As he and Dorgali glanced down at the unconscious detectives, a wicked look of exultation swept over their swarthy faces.

"Got them, at last!" cried Pippo in his native tongue.

"That was a lucky stroke," Dorgali laughed.

"How do you like my device for knocking out enemies, now?"

"When you fixed it to-day, to guard against any attack that might arise in the future, I ridiculed it and laughed at you. Now, I take off my hat to you."

"Thanks," chuckled Pippo, with a grin. "I am not quite such a fool as I look, brave captain. The affair has already paid for the trouble it cost to rig it up. I'm satisfied."

Both laughed with glee.

It was evident they had patched up a truce.

They had to.

By accident they learned that both belonged to the Mafia, only that while Pippo was a petty officer, Dorgali was a chief official.

Sworn to brotherhood, they shook hands, and practically ruled all the members of their organization who resided in Mulberry Bend.

This was the real secret of their power.

The house which they then occupied was the meeting place of their band, and the Bradys were at their mercy.

"Secure them with ropes," said Dorgali to his followers.

They obeyed him like veritable slaves; then one of them bound up his wounded wrist, and they held a conference.

It was an excited debate.

A conclusion was finally reached by Dorgali, who then said to his eager companions:

"These detectives must perish."

"Both are sworn enemies of the Mafia," added Pippo, emphatically.

"Kill them, then!" exclaimed one of the men, sullenly.

"We need not do that," said Dorgali, wickedly. "We can let the river do the job for us. I've got a plan to that effect."

"Name it," said Pippo, curiously.

"We need merely fasten them in the sewer in a sitting posture. When the tide turns and rises, it will go above their heads and drown them."

The rest approved of this simple plan.

In fact, one of them said in calculating tones:

"And when they are finished, we shall only have to unbind them, and let the receding tide carry their bodies out into the river."

"Those who find the remains will think they were drowned," added another man. "I mean," he remarked, "drowned by accident."

"Certainly they will be drowned, anyway," laughed Dorgali. "But we will absolutely know they were. Those fellows were the curse of my life. They have haunted me like shadows and menaced my life."

"They'll never do it again," declared Pippo.

"I wonder what they did with Marco? He didn't enter with them."

"The boy must be waiting for them out in the sewer."

"If he is, we can easily recapture him and make him share their fate."

Under Dorgali's directions the senseless detectives were closely examined, and it was found that they had lumps on their skulls where the beam struck them, but otherwise were uninjured.

The gang carried them out to the sewer.

Here they discovered that the Bradys' boat was missing, and there was not a sign of Marco in the place.

"He must have escaped to the river in their boat," suggested Pippo. "We won't find him around here in a hurry again."

"Then get rid of these sleuths as I ordered!" exclaimed Dorgali, impatiently.

CHAPTER XIV.

WATCHING THE RISING TIDE.

It was a weird scene in the gloomy, vile-odored sewer, when that group of Italians carried the bound detectives through the door in the wall.

There was a grim, devilish look upon their dark faces.

Both detectives were so bound that they could not move hand or foot. They did not take the trouble to gag them, as there was not the remotest possibility of any one hearing any cries for aid they might utter in that subterranean vault.

"Where shall we place them?" demanded Pippo.

"In the middle of the sewer, where the water is deepest," Dorgali replied.

He pointed at the indicated spot.

The detectives had recovered their faculties.

Both had severe headaches from the blows they received, but were more painfully conscious of the fact that they were prisoners.

At first it puzzled them to fathom the design of their foes.

But when the men bound their legs doubled under them, and sat them down in the water, the truth flashed across their minds.

They were placed side by side.

"Harry, they mean to drown us," said Old King Brady, in low tones.

"Can't be helped," replied the boy, coolly.

Dorgali overheard their remarks, and a demoniacal expression spread over his florid face, and his black eyes snapped, as he cried in English:

"You are right, Brady, we mean to let the tide rise over your heads."

"You are a diabolical scoundrel!" exclaimed the old detective. "Why don't you shoot, stab, or poison us?"

"By those means you'd go off too quick to suit me."

"Then you wish to gloat over our sufferings by condemning us to a lingering death fraught with extreme mental torture?"

"I mean to make you suffer tenfold the agony I underwent when you relentlessly shot me!" hissed the Italian, vindictively.

"You couldn't have hit upon a better method."

"Oh, I know what I'm about."

"Is only revenge actuating you?"

"Not entirely. Fear for my safety has something to do with it."

"You expected we'd arrest you, eh?"

"Well, you ought to know what you intended doing."

"Of course."

"But I'll baffle your design."

"Don't be too sure."

"I don't see how you can escape me now."

"Nor I. Yet I feel that we will finally have the satisfaction of sending you to Italy for killing the Count and Countess of Villanova."

"Who killed them?"

"You. Mora told us of your vendetta."

"Curse Mora. He's dead."

"Yes. Assassinated at your order by Pippo."

"That's an infernal lie."

"Your accomplice confessed his guilt to us when we had the handcuffs on him. I see he's rid of them, and suppose you filed them off."

Dorgali looked ugly.

Turning to Pippo he demanded in savage tones:

"Did you tell him that?"

Pippo flushed and dropped his glance.

"Signor," he faltered, "they wrung a confession from me——"

"Senseless fool!" impatiently growled Dorgali.

"Recollect, I could not help myself."

"You are a traitor."

"No——no——"

"I say you are."

Pippo was silent.

He feared Dorgali's wrath.

The banker now turned to his followers, and said in Italian:

"Go back to the house."

"Are you going to remain?" queried Pippo.

"No. There is no necessity. We can return in an hour or two, and see whether the tide has done its work for us."

The gang filed out.

In a few moments the Bradys were alone.

Both felt depressed in spirits over their grave plight.

"We can't expect any aid here, Harry," said the old detective, finally.

"Very true. We are quite alone, and are pretty sure to perish."

"It don't trouble you much."

"What's the use of fighting against the fortune of war."

A silence ensued for awhile.

They kept watching the treacherous water.

It kept running out for a long time with the receding tide, but finally became stagnated.

"Do you see that?" queried Young King Brady, anxiously.

"The tide is turning," admitted his partner.

"It will soon begin to back up into the sewer."

"When it does, that's our finish."

Another silence ensued.

They soon felt the water rising.

It was then that Pippo came through the doorway in the wall, and stood on the stairs watching them.

The padrone grinned at them, and finally said in English:

"Cospetto! Youa soon croak."

"I'll be glad when the water covers our eyes," replied Harry.

"Why?" demanded the Italian, in amazement.

"So we won't have to look at your horrible face."

Pippo scowled angrily.

His pride was wounded, and he swore at them in his native tongue, and growled:

"Me nota care whata yon tink."

"Pippo, you're a beast!"

"Per bacco, I'll——"

"You old lobster, you're no good!"

"You wanta me knock off youa head?" roared Pippo, flaring up.

"Why, you garlic-eating old ruffian, you don't dare!"

Pippo half drew a knife from his sash.

But just then a sudden reflection caused him to pause, and with a sly look upon his yellow, bewhiskered face, he exclaimed:

"No—no. You wanta geta me mad. Pippo know. Den I killa you. Dat makit you go too quick. Carrissima, no!"

He had fathomed Harry's design.

The boy felt keenly disappointed at not getting killed, for he designed to end their misery as soon as possible.

The fast rising water about their submerged bodies told the young detective that their torture had only just begun.

He calculated that their case was hopeless.

As death was sure, he figured upon the relief of a speedy ending, but since Pippo recognized his design this hope was abandoned.

"He's a cunning scoundrel!" grumbled the boy.

"You are desperate, Harry," Old King Brady muttered.

"Haven't I cause to be?"

"Not yet. While there's life there's hope."

"I can't see it in this case."

"Restrain your impatience."

"I can't do it."

"Something may turn up."

"Humbug."

"Well, I ain't going to despond until the water is choking me."

"Wish I could be as hopeful as you."

Just then Pippo disappeared through the hole in the wall, and the Bradys were left alone once more.

They remained quietly watching the rising tide, and as it mounted higher and still higher around their bodies, a cold feeling of blank despair kept creeping over the officers' hearts.

Within a few minutes the tide was up to their necks, and the rats scampering in and out of the holes in the masonry, mounted higher to get beyond the high water level.

The prisoners watched them enviously until the oil in the lamp was all consumed and the light went out.

A dense gloom settled upon the scene.

It added to the horror of the detectives' situation.

"Pity we can't see," Harry commented, finally.

"Have you made any effort to shake off your bonds?"

"Yes, indeed. But the water has swelled the ropes till

they cut into my flesh and tightened more than they were before."

"If we could only move."

"You can't release yourself, can you?"

"No. I've been trying every method."

"We are doomed, Old King Brady."

"It seems so. The water is up to my mouth now."

"In a few minutes more all will be over."

"Yell for help."

Harry complied, and his partner added his voice to the boy's. But only a mocking echo came back through the great sewer, and the still rising tide made their hearts sink with despair.

"It's no use," said the boy, finally. "Good-by, old man."

"We ain't dead yet, Harry."

Old King Brady was hopeful till the last.

CHAPTER XV.

A POLICE RAID.

"What's that?"

"A light."

"Yell, Harry!"

"Help! Help!"

Down the vaulted passage came the cry of:

"Hello! Who's that?"

"The Bradys. And you?"

"Marco."

"Thank Heaven. Come quick."

"What's the matter?"

"We are on the verge of drowning."

The Bradys' skiff had come around the bend, the lantern in the bow showing the boy pushing the craft along with an oar.

Marco saw the two pale faces on the surface of the water.

They were bent back to prevent the brine pouring into their mouths and nostrils, for the water was then very high.

In a moment Marco reached them.

He grabbed Harry by the hair, and easily pulled him to the top of the water. But here he had trouble to drag him into the boat.

Like a flash his pocket knife was drawn, opened, and the keen blade sliced the ropes, and Harry was free.

He was fearfully cramped.

But he paid no heed to his pains.

Old King Brady was perishing before his eyes, and the painful sound of his efforts to blow the water from his mouth caused the young detective to leap overboard and seize him.

He lifted his partner just in time.

It only took a minute for Old King Brady to recover his breath, although he had almost been strangled.

"Safe!" he gasped. "I told you I hadn't lost hope."

"You're a wonder for faith."

"Cut my bonds, Marco."

The Italian boy complied, and they all entered the boat. When they felt entirely recovered, Harry asked the boy:

"Where have you been?"

"Out on the river."

"What for?"

"Hunting for cops."

"River police?"

"Yes. I wanted them to help you."

"And you failed to find any?"

"That's what brought me back alone."

"You arrived none too soon. We owe you our lives."

"I'm glad I saved you, sir. I feared you'd come to grief."

"Let's get out of here," suggested Old King Brady. "Our ammunition is wet and useless. Unarmed we would accomplish nothing, pitted against that bunch of rogues."

They pushed the boat down the sewer.

In a short time the main artery was reached, and they passed on down to the river in silence.

The boat was returned to its owner.

Then the trio proceeded toward Renwick street, and Marco said:

"Why, the Mafia headquarters are in that little street."

"Do you know which house?" questioned Harry.

"Very well, indeed. I've been there with Pippo."

"Point it out. We are convinced that we were in that house."

Marco soon showed them a little old brick house with dormer windows, standing in the middle of the block.

"There's the place," he remarked.

"Are you sure?"

"Positive."

"Wait here till I return."

"Where are you going to now, Harry?"

"To summon a platoon of police."

"Good idea."

Old King Brady and Marco stood on the corner and waited, while Harry rushed away to find a police signal box.

The young detective soon returned.

"Be here in ten minutes," he announced.

They watched the house of the assassins. It was very dark. All the blinds were closed, and no ray of light shone forth.

"Looks deserted," said Marco.

"Can't judge by appearances," replied Old King Brady.

In less than quarter of an hour a wagon load of policemen came rattling up to the corner and paused.

The detectives met them and explained the situation.

A couple of patrolmen were sent down to the river to guard the mouth of the sewer, and Harry said to the remainder:

"Now break into the house."

An ax demolished the front door and revealed a dark interior, but they all had lights and rushed into the house.

A rapid search for their foes was made, but although they scoured the building from garret to cellar, they failed to find any trace of their enemies.

The house was entirely deserted.

How they learned that the raid was planned could only be surmised at. The truth was, however, that a spy saw the detectives standing on the corner and reported to the rest.

A hasty exit over the back fence resulted when the patrol wagon came along, for the villains expected to be raided.

"Nothing doing," laughed the police sergeant.

"They've given us the slip very cleverly," growled Young King Brady. "However, we are bound to land them sooner or later."

"Better leave an officer here on guard, with orders to arrest any man who enters the place," said Old King Brady, quietly.

"I'll act on your suggestion."

And it was done.

The rest drove down to the foot of Canal street.

Here the policemen guarding the sewer vent were questioned, but declared that no one had come out of the tunnel.

As the Bradys could do no more that night, they dismissed the policemen and took Marco home with them.

On the following day the boy promised to meet them at police headquarters, so they could put him in care of the Italian Consul, and he then went to see his friends.

The Bradys had a consultation with their chief.

Having told him all that transpired, they sent out a score of detectives to scour the city in quest of the two arch villains.

Before noon Marco came in.

He told them how glad his friends were to find him alive, and said he had parted with them forever.

The Italian Consul was then summoned, told the boy's history and readily agreed to see that he was returned safe to Sicily.

Marco departed with him.

Two days passed by uneventfully after that.

The officers guarding the Renwick street place reported that none of the Italians had come near the house, and the officers detailed to scour the city reported that nothing had been seen of Dorgali or Pippo.

They had hidden themselves very effectively.

The obstinacy with which they remained concealed made the Bradys nervous and restless, and they hit upon a plan to get some news.

Disguising themselves to look like a pair of Italians, they went down to Mulberry Bend one afternoon, and began to haunt the neighborhood of Pippo's house.

Here they carefully examined every Italian who passed by until at length Harry suddenly pointed at a man coming up the street smoking a pipe, and whispered:

"There's one of them, now."

"One of the gang who was in the Renwick street house?"

"Yes. Look at his features. Don't you recognize him?"

"His face is very familiar."

"We'll tackle him anyhow."

Convinced that the fellow was one of the men they wanted, the officers crouched in a doorway until he drew nearer.

Then they sprang from their covert and pounced on him.

Old King Brady's hand fell on the man's arm, and he exclaimed:

"Here! I want you!"

"Me?" gasped the startled man, recoiling.

"You are my prisoner."

"What?"

"Oh, we are detectives."

"But what have I done?"

"Come along, and you'll find out."

"I won't!"

"Then we'll have to force you, sir."

And click! went the bracelets on his wrists, and he found himself linked to Old King Brady, a hopeless prisoner.

The man got frightened then.

"All right. I'll go along!" he exclaimed, in tones of alarm.

CHAPTER XVI.

PUMPING A PRISONER.

The Bradys took their unwilling prisoner down to headquarters and arraigned him before the chief's desk.

Harry then said to his superior officer:

"We've got one of the gang."

"That's good," said the chief with a nod.

"Will you quiz him?"

"Certainly. See here, my man!"

"Yes, sir," replied the Italian, uneasily.

"What's your name?"

"Tony Picoli."

"Age?"

"Fifty."

"Residence?"

"No. 40 Mulberry street."

"Occupation?"

"Barber."

"Family?"

"None."

"Haven't you been arrested before?"

"Once."

"On what charge?"

"Fighting."

"I thought so. You answer like a person used to giving his pedigree to the police. Now, we know you are a member of the Mafia secret society, and we want some information from you."

"What about, sir?"

"The location of Luigi Dorgali and Pippo, the padrone."

"I don't know them."

"Oh, yes, you do. They are leaders of your gang."

"Well, I don't know where they are."

"What's the use of lying?"

"I'm telling the truth."

"No, you ain't."

"I can't force you to believe me."

"No. That's a fact. But I'll force you to tell the truth."

"You can't make me speak if I don't wish to."

"We'll see about that."

The chief touched an electric press button on his desk, and two officers came running in, saluted, and one asked:

"Well, sir?"

"Take this prisoner downstairs."

"Yes, sir."

"Look him in a dark cell."

"All right, sir."

The Italian's face turned very pale.

He knew from experience what solitary confinement in a dark cell was, and feared it worse than death.

This was the favorite mode of punishment for criminals in his native country, and usually drove the prisoner crazy.

Picoli turned pleadingly to the chief.

"Don't do that!" he faltered.

"If the prisoner don't behave," continued the chief, ignoring him entirely, "strip and beat him into submission."

"Yes, sir," replied the attending officer.

He seized Picoli roughly by the collar, and growled:

"Come on!"

"No! Wait! Chief!" cried the man.

"What do you want?"

"I'll answer your questions."

"You are too late."

"For pity's sake have mercy," begged the terrified man.

"Why didn't you do as I asked in the first place?"

"Let me speak now, I beseech of you."

"What have you got to say?"

"I'll tell where Dorgali is if you will let me go."

"How about Pippo, too?"

"I don't know where he is; I swear it, chief."

"Where is Dorgali?"

"Hidden in my house."

"Ah! At No. 40?"

"Yes."

"Is he there now?"

"No. He went out."

"Where to?"

"To see a lawyer in Temple Court."

"What's the counsellor's name?"

"Felix Kendrick."

"Do you know what Dorgali's business with him is?"

"Yes. It has something to do with a legacy in Sicily."

"The Villanova estate?"

"That's it."

The chief smiled at the Bradys. It was evident that the banker was carrying out his original plot to rob Marco.

With such information the Bradys now had a chance to thwart the rascal's evil designs.

Turning his attention to the prisoner again, the chief asked him:

"Isn't Dorgali putting up his original job of trying to have himself appointed a guardian of young Villanova?"

"Yes, sir," replied Picoli.

He wondered how the chief knew so much about the matter, and caused him to speak out more unreservedly. He figured that as the police knew so much already, concealment was useless.

"Now see here," said the chief, fixing him with a glance.

"Well, sir?" replied the barber, with a troubled look.

"Dorgali hasn't got the rightful heir."

"No. We are aware you have hold of Marco."

"Then he is going to usurp Marco's place with an impostor or dummy?"

"Yes. That's the plan."

"I thought as much. Who is he?"

"An Italian boy named Joe——"

"Any relation of yours?"

"My son," admitted the barber, hesitatingly.

"Then you are ringing in with him on that deal?"

"It's of no use to deny it, sir."

The chief laughed and shook his head, saying:

"No. It's of no use. As long as the impostor is your son it is fair to assume that you expect a divvy on the game."

"Such is our arrangement."

"Well, how far advanced is the trick?"

"Every point has been attended to. The boy's identity has been established. The legal papers are sworn to. Dorgali is posing as Marco's uncle and only relative, and the papers have been forwarded to Italy to consummate the trick."

"Yon fellows must have been working briskly."

"We haven't let the grass grow under our feet," replied the barber, with a sickly smile. "But at the eleventh hour you've nabbed me, and I can see that you are going to baffle our game."

"You are right, Mr. Picoli," laughed the chief. "Now this Lawyer Kendrick must be a party to the plot, too, isn't he?"

"Of course. We had to let him in on the ground floor."

"Has Dorgali got any money?"

"Plenty. His failure in Messina was a fake, to swindle his creditors."

"So I presumed. Looks as if he was an all around fraud."

"He makes his money by crooked work exclusively."

"Well, we'll nip his career in the bud in this country."

"Anything else?"

"No."

"Then I suppose you'll let me go?"

"Oh, no. Not yet. We need you as a witness."

"Ha! You've deceived me!"

"So I have, Picoli," was the cool reply. "If we let you go, the very first thing you would do, would be to go and put our mutual friend, Dorgali, on his guard, and he'd escape."

"Oh, what a fool I was to admit so much to you."

"On the contrary, you've saved your own bacon, for in view of your admissions, I'm inclined to be very easy on you."

The prisoner reflected and heaved a deep sigh.

Then he muttered:

"Well, there's some consolation in that."

The chief made a motion to the two attendants, and said:

"Lock him up, but treat him well, as he acted decently."

"Very well, sir."

And they took the prisoner from the office.

When he was gone, the chief turned to the Bradys, and said:

"You've got your cue now; follow it up."

The detectives nodded and departed from the office.

"Now for Mr. Kendrick's office," said Old King Brady, as they hastened out into the street.

And they boarded a car and rode downtown.

CHAPTER XVII.

MAKING A DOUBLE ARREST.

Upon reaching Temple Court, the detectives consulted the hall directory and soon found the name of Felix Kendrick.

He had an office on the third floor.

Ascending in the elevator, they approached the door bearing his name, pushed it open, and passed inside.

An office boy met them.

"Well, sir?" he asked Old King Brady.

"Is Mr. Kendrick in?" asked the officer, politely.

"Yes, sir, but he is busy. Won't you sit down?"

"How long will he detain us?"

"I couldn't tell you, sir. Is your business important?"

"Very;" declared the old detective.

"Give me your card then, and I'll see if he will grant an interview."

The detective handed the boy his card.

Glancing at it, the young fellow strode through the office to a private compartment at the rear, and knocked at the ground-glass door.

As soon as he disappeared inside, the officers glided in after him.

They paused outside the door, just in time to hear the boy say:

"Two gentlemen to see you on important business, Mr. Kendrick."

"What name?" demanded the lawyer.

"Here's their card."

A moment later they heard the lawyer exclaim in startled tones:

"The Bradys!"

"Ave Maria!" groaned another voice, in horrified accents.

The detectives recognized the speaker by his voice as Dorgali, and they smiled at his exhibition of alarm.

A deep silence ensued.

Finally the lawyer said:

"Tell them I ain't in."

"But I've said you were."

"Idiot! Why did you?"

"How was I to know you didn't wish to meet them."

The lawyer reflected a few moments, then he said:

"Go and tell them I'm so very busy I have no time to see them, and ask them to return here to-morrow morning."

"Very well, sir."

The boy was going out to deliver the message, then Dorgali cried:

"Hold on there a moment."

"All right, sir."

"Kendrick, what does this call from them mean?"

"Hard to say, Dorgali," answered the lawyer.

"Do you think they are next to our game?"

"I wouldn't be surprised. Why else would they call here."

"We must throw them off the track, somehow."

"Just my opinion. But how?"

"Give them a bluff."

They both chuckled, but just then the door flew open with a bang, and the two detectives strode in, and Harry said to the astounded pair:

"We'll call your bluff now, gentlemen!"

The schemers sprang to their feet as if electrified.

"Caught!" Dorgali muttered, utterly aghast.

"This is tough!" groaned the lawyer, recoiling against the wall.

Keeping themselves between the door and their victims, the Bradys stood regarding the pair with cynical smiles.

Then Old King Brady exclaimed:

"Gentlemen, you are our prisoners."

The lawyer turned pale and asked in hoarse tones as he began to sweat:

"Where is your warrant?"

"None needed," coolly answered Old King Brady.

"Then I'll refuse to submit, sir!"

"Nonsense. Don't be a fool, Kendrick."

"Such a thing is impossible, sir, and I want you to know, sir, that I understand the law, as it applies to warrants and arrests."

"How about you, Dorgali?"

"I have nothing to say."

"You are sensible. Do you submit?"

"There's no help for it."

"Just range up alongside of your pal."

The Italian obeyed mechanically. All the pluck was suddenly taken out of him. He did not have the spirit to even show fight.

Mr. Kendrick, on the other hand, stood on his dignity as a lawyer.

But Harry soon brought him down from his lofty perch.

The boy aimed his pistol at Kendrick's eye, and asked him:

"Do you see this pistol?"

"I do, sir, and wish you to remove it."

"Well, it's the most legal document we've got about us, and we know exactly how to use it to best advantage."

"Lower it," roared the alarmed lawyer. "Do you want to kill me?"

"I do, unless you obey me to the letter."

"What do you want now, sir?"

"Just hold your arm next to the Italian's."

"What's that for?"

"So we can hitch you together with the bracelets."

"I won't!"

"No?" asked Harry, and he made a sudden movement with his pistol, and as quick as a flash the lawyer did as he was ordered.

"Don't shoot!" he yelled, frantic with fear.

"Secure them, Old King Brady."

The old detective had a pair of steel fetters in his hand, and he quickly snapped one on each man's wrist.

Linked together, neither man could hope to escape without dragging the other along with him.

The Bradys felt a sense of great satisfaction over the case with which they had captured this pair of scoundrels.

Kendrick was very nervous over his trouble, and he now said:

"I'd like to know, sir, what the meaning of our arrest is?"

"Conspiracy, fraud, false representation, swindling and murder," said Harry.

"What?" gasped the lawyer, his eyes fairly bulging.

"To be more explicit," said Harry, "I'll simply say that Picoli told us all about your plot to gain Marco Villanova's fortune from Sicily, by using his son Joe as a dummy. You are a party to this crime alone."

The lawyer groaned, for he realized that his villainy was exposed.

"As for your pal Dorgali, he murdered a man and woman in Sicily, and paid an assassin to kill the detective who came to this country to arrest him for those heinous crimes."

The banker's florid face was twitching.

He looked like a dying man, but he controlled his emotion enough to say in low, tremulous tones:

"You'll have to prove those charges before you can convict me."

"We already have Pippo's evidence about the murder of Mora," answered Harry. "And we'll soon have his evidence in court to clinch the charge at your trial."

"I defy you to do so."

"We accept your challenge."

Old King Brady now beckoned to the prisoners, and said coolly:

"Come on. We can't waste any more time here uselessly discussing this matter. We are going to lock you up. Don't attempt any treachery in an effort to escape, or it will seal your doom."

The prisoners were led from the office, and a short time afterward they were lodged in jail.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCLUSION.

The detectives were careful to conceal from the newspapers the fact that Kendrick and Dorgali were captured.

They did not want the news to reach Pippo's ears, as it was likely to frighten him out of the city.

It would then be much harder for them to find him.

Scouring the padrone's usual haunts, and bending every energy toward capturing the man, the Bradys spent several days.

Pippo was well concealed.

Moreover, he kept himself out of sight.

The Bradys watched his house.

"We are most likely to find him by means of his wife," the old detective concluded. "We must watch her."

Everywhere the woman went, day or night, she was carefully shadowed by the detectives.

This went on for several days.

Then they played a trick on her.

Having a letter written to Pippo in Italian, they mailed it to his address, and then shadowed the house.

On the following morning the letter carrier was seen to deliver the letter to Pippo's wife.

When the man was gone, the woman opened and read the note.

It was couched in these terms:

"Dear Pippo:—Meet me at eight o'clock, without fail, at the Renwick street house. I am going back to Italy to-morrow, and wish to pay you the \$1,000 I owe, before I depart. I also have a secret to impart, of vital interest. Your life is at stake. If you fail to see me, you may be a dead man to-morrow.
Dorgali"

It was an alluring note, couched in such terms as to arouse the cupidity and curiosity of any woman.

They expected she would carry it to her hidden husband.

Then, by following her, they expected to capture him.

Old King Brady made no error of judgment in that case, for they finally saw the woman emerge from the house.

Going over to the Bowery, she paused before one of the lodging houses, and ascended the stairs.

Up in the office she spoke to the clerk, and then passed back through a narrow hall upon which numerous tiny rooms opened. Knocking at one of the doors, she was admitted to a room.

The Bradys were so close behind her that they keenly observed all her actions, and noted where she vanished.

As the clerk approached and asked if they wanted a room, Young King Brady laughed, showed his shield, and said:

"No. But we want one of your lodgers."

"Fly cops, eh?" asked the clerk, uneasily.

"That's our lay."

"Who is it you want?"

"The dago that woman came to see."

"Her husband?"

"Yes."

"Oh! He's in No. 86."

"Very well."

They quickly went down the passage.

Upon reaching the door in question, they heard the murmur of voices in Italian on the other side.

Listening, they ascertained that it was Pippo and his wife in conversation.

They burst open the door at once, and rushed into the room.

The man held the letter in his hand.

Hearing the crash at the door, they recoiled, uttering startled cries, and when they saw and recognized the detectives, Pippo shouted:

"By Heavens, de detectives!"

"Dey musta follow me," groaned his wife.

"That decoy letter did the business," exclaimed Harry.

"Up with your hands!" Old King Brady shouted, sternly.

Pippo drew the knife from his red sash.

He was frantic with desperation, and cried hoarsely:

"I die fighting!"

"Drop that knife, or I'll fire."

"Nota wance till I run him ina you heart!" he replied, fiercely, and he made a panther-like spring at the old detective.

His wife rushed at Old King Brady, too.

Seeing this, Harry seized her, and they struggled.

Old King Brady pulled the trigger, but the cartridge failed to explode, and the next instant Pippo gripped him by the throat.

Up went the murderous knife.

For an instant it looked as if the old detective was doomed.

But as that powerful arm descended, Harry shot him in the shoulder, while he held off the woman with one hand.

A howl of agony escaped Pippo.

He fell writhing and yelling upon the floor.

A patrol wagon was summoned and carried Pippo away.

The work of the Bradys was finished.

When Dorgali was tried and convicted, he was extradited, sent to Italy and there expiated his crime according to Italy's laws.

His plan to rob Marco thus proved a failure, and as the consul sent Marco home, the little Italian boy eventually secured his rights.

Pippo was convicted of murdering Antonio Mora, and was sent to State's prison for life.

The Bradys then took up with other work at Secret Service headquarters, and added to their fame as criminal hunters.

The work they did on the exciting new case they handled will be duly recorded in our next number.

And, until we meet them again, we will wish them adieu.

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS' BATTLE FOR LIFE: OR, THE KEEN DETECTIVES' GREATEST PERIL," which will be the next number (89) of "Secret Service."

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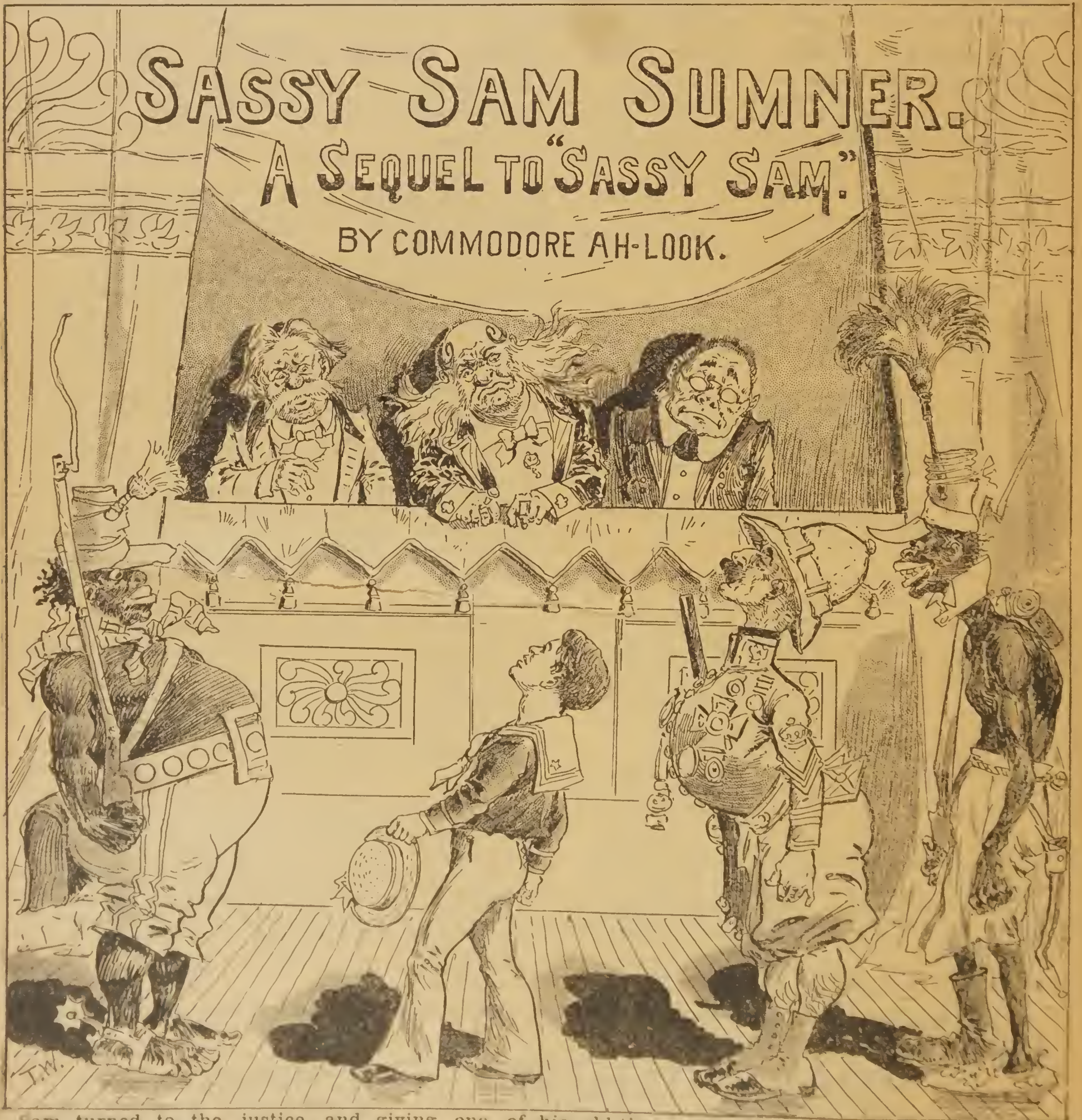
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